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Independent Review of FAO Governance Reforms

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Food and Agriculture
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Independent Review of FAO Governance reforms

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Office of Evaluation (OED)

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Acronyms

APRC	Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific
ARC	Regional Conference for Africa
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
COAG	Committee on Agriculture
CCP	Committee on Commodity Problems
CoC-IEE	Conference Committee for IEE follow-up
COFI	Committee on Fisheries
COFO	Committee on Forestry
ERC	Regional Conference for Europe
FC	Finance Committee
GBs	Governing Bodies
ICC	Independent Chair of the Council
ICN2	Second International Conference on Nutrition
IEE	Independent External Evaluation
IMRG/s	Informal Meetings of Regional Groups
iNARC	informal Regional Conference for North America
IPA	Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal
IR Team	Independent Review Team
JM	Joint Meeting of the Finance and Programme Committee
LARC	Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean
MTP	Medium Term Plan
MYPOWs	Multi-Year Plans of Work
NERC	Regional Conference for the Near East
OED	FAO Office of Evaluation
OSD	Office for Support to Decentralization
PC	Programme Committee
PIR	Programme Implementation Report
PWB	Programme of Work and Budget
RC/s	Regional Conference/s
Reviewed SF	Reviewed Strategic Framework
RO/s	Regional Office/s
SOFA	State of Food and Agriculture
TC/s	FAO Technical Committee/s
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WFP	World Food Programme

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1. In 2008, FAO Conference approved the Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal (IPA),¹ which had been developed through intensive collaboration among FAO Members and Secretariat to integrate the recommendations formulated by the Independent External Evaluation (IEE) in mid-2007.² From among a total of 274 IPA actions, 101 were included in the chapter on Governance, including Action 2.74, which foresaw that “*the Conference will assess the workings of the governance reforms, including the role and functioning of the Regional Conferences, with an independent review as an input to this process.*”³

2. Action 2.74 was planned for implementation in 2014 so that the Independent Review could serve as an input to the 2015 Conference session. In December 2013, the FAO Council reviewed and endorsed the ‘Arrangements for an Independent Review of Governance Reforms’,⁴ which included the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Independent Review.⁵ At the same time, the Council also endorsed the appointment of an independent team of two external consultants, who would be supported by the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) in their work.⁶ This proposal requested: the Independent Chair of the Council (ICC) to play a proactive facilitation role for the entire review process and to hold open-ended Informal meetings with the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Groups (IMRGs) to guide the Independent Review process; and the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees (JM) to ensure oversight of the Independent Review exercise.

3. This document is the draft report of the Independent Review Team (IR Team), submitted to the Members of FAO for their comments and suggestions. As Senior Management is also an important stakeholder in the Review, the draft is also being made available to them for their comments and suggestions. The Joint Meeting of the 116th Session of the Programme Committee and 155th Session of the Finance Committee on 5 November 2014 and the 150th session of Council in December 2014 will discuss the draft and provide their inputs to the IR Team, who will make the final report available by the end of December 2014. The final report will be a document for the 39th session of the FAO Conference in June 2015, and will be reviewed beforehand at the Joint Meeting of the 117th Session of the Programme Committee and 156th Session of the Finance Committee and at the 151th session of Council in March 2015.

1.2 Scope and methodology

4. The ToR for the Independent Review tasked the IR Team with reviewing the work undertaken by FAO, the Governing Bodies (GBs)⁷ and Membership as well as the Secretariat to implement the entire set of IPA actions, numbered 2.1 to 2.101, dealing with corporate

¹ C 2008/4, Report of the Conference Committee on Follow-up to the Independent External Evaluation of FAO Immediate Plan of Action.

² The IEE report was discussed by FAO Conference in November 2007, C 2007/7A.1.

³ C 2008/REP, E16.

⁴ CL 148/10; CL 148/REP, paras 21-24.

⁵ CL 148/10, Annex 1, Terms of Reference.

⁶ CL 148/10 Add.1, Annex 2, Profile of the Independent Review Team.

⁷ These are: Conference, Council, Programme Committee, Finance Committee, Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters; Technical Committees, Regional Conferences, and Statutory Bodies.

governance reform mechanisms. The ToR also requested that intensive consultation with FAO Members be a key feature of the Independent Review.

5. It is important to highlight that the Independent Review is a **review of governance reforms** and not of FAO's programmatic and administrative work. Furthermore the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), which was an FAO Governing Body at the time of the IEE and IPA formulation, had changed status as a result of a separate reform process and has not been an FAO Governing Body since 2009.⁸ Therefore, it was not part of the scope of this Independent Review.

6. The implementation of the governance reforms was assessed against the following criteria:

- i. Coverage: extent to which all envisaged actions and sub-actions have been implemented, and reasons for not doing so, if any;
- ii. Efficiency: overall efficiency gains through improved timeliness of action, rationalization of the governance mechanisms, clarity and simplification of communication flow, etc.; attention was also be given to the analysis of actual and transaction costs linked to the governance reform process and to its new set-up;
- iii. Effectiveness: overall results of the IPA actions on the substantive governance of FAO, in terms of improved guidance by the GBs to the Secretariat and the feed-back flow from the Secretariat to the GBs;
- iv. Impact, insofar as was possible, on the actual and potential lasting changes on FAO's performance stemming from the implementation of the IPA-related governance reforms.

7. The IR team used the following main tools:⁹

- A map of all relevant IPA actions and sub-actions related to governance reform and tracking their implementation;
- An analysis of changes in the governance set-up, including timing, sequence and number of sessions, contents of agendas, quality of reports, costs: the biennia 2006/2007 and 2012/2013 were used as key points in time for all analysis, although in some cases other biennia were also included;
- A review of other four UN entities, namely UNDP, UNESCO, WHO and WFP which had also been used by the IEE as comparators, in terms of the size and composition of Council, Council's recommendation of budget level to Conference and qualifications of the Director General;
- Perceptions of key stakeholders through in-depth interviews: semi-structured interviews were carried out with 217 stakeholders, the majority of them Members; FAO Senior Managers and Secretaries of GBs; and FAO staff;
- Key stakeholders perceptions through a questionnaire (hereinafter called the Survey) of Permanent Representatives and Members participating in all GBs since 2012;
- Perceptions of Secretaries of Article XIV Bodies on the relationship with FAO on administrative and management aspects through questionnaires;
- Direct observation of the following sessions of Governing Bodies:

⁸ CFS:2009/2 Rev.2.

⁹ The detailed methodology of the Independent Review is described in Annex 3 of this report.

- 2014 Regional Conferences;
- 98th session of the CCLM, March 2014
- 2014 COFI, selected sessions;
- 2014 COFO, all sessions;
- 115th session of the Programme Committee, May 2014;
- 154th session of the Finance Committee, May 2014;
- Joint Meeting of the 115th session of the Programme Committee and 154th session of the Finance Committee; and
- 149th session of the Council, June 2014.

8. In addition, the IR Team interacted with the Members in three open-ended IMRGs held on 7 February, 15 May and 9 September 2014 respectively; at the Joint Meeting of the 115th session of the Programme Committee and 154th session of the Finance Committee, on 28 May; and at the 149th session of the Council, on 16 June.

9. The IR Team notes that the term ‘Independent Review’ has been used for its work rather than ‘evaluation’. This raised the question in our minds as to whether to make ‘recommendations’ or simply to propose matters for Members’ consideration. We have decided to make recommendations dealing with what we believe are the major issues for further reform, for the consideration of the Governing Bodies. We are also making some proposals on ‘nuts and bolts’ issues that we believe will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of governance, prefacing these with the language: members may wish to consider. both recommendations and proposals for consideration are listed at the end of each Section and synthesized in Section 19.

10. The IR Team was supported throughout by OED, which contributed to the development of the methodology and related tools, data gathering and analysis, management and logistics. OED plans to carry out the standard quality assurance process on this draft. However, the findings and conclusions in the review are the IR Team’s own. In particular, to avoid any conflict of interest, OED recused itself from the discussion of the implementation of IPA Actions 2.77 to 2.90, related to the evaluation function in the Organization.

11. Finally the Team would like to note that FAO Members have asked it to be ambitious in its work in order to provide a substantial basis for their own further deliberation on governance reform. The Team has taken this advice to heart and has consequently probed each of the IPA actions to see what more might be done, if the GBs so choose. The conditions that stimulated FAO’s establishment in the 1940s are still valid today, and an effective governance system is all the more needed to guide and support FAOs contribution to attaining a world without hunger where the earth sustains life for all of its inhabitants

2 Overview of the FAO Governance System

2.1 *The Enabling Environment for Governance*

12. The IEE found that FAO had “*a serious governance problem,*”¹⁰ due to lack of clarity of the roles and responsibilities of the various GBs and their modes of operation, but also because of deficiencies in the enabling environment in which governance functioned. The IEE noted that this environment was characterized by distrust; poor communication; inadequate transparency; divisiveness among the Members and between the GBs as a whole and the Secretariat, a low sense of accountability by the Secretariat to the GBs; and a resistance by the GBs themselves to delegate responsibilities among themselves or to exercise initiative as Members of GBs. The IEE also drew attention to an increasingly inward-looking focus by the GBs on the Secretariat rather than the necessary attention to their global governance role.

13. The Members’ response to the IEE was remarkable. They organized themselves as a Committee of the Conference (CoC-IEE), formed working groups to study the IEE and, on that basis, developed the IPA, which was approved by Conference in its 35th (Special) session in 2008. Indeed, the IPA has been described as a “member-driven reform”.

14. Six years later, the IR Team found great improvement in many of the ways in which governance functions and in the enabling environment for governance. Perhaps most significantly, the IR Team found that trust had been for the large part re-established between Members and between Members and Management, which it considered one of the most important achievements of the IPA.

15. Among the factors leading to the re-emergence of trust are: the sense by Members that the Secretariat is now much more transparent as regards information-sharing and documentation; the Secretariat’s extensive availability to and engagement with Members both in formal and informal meetings; and the frequent meetings of the Director-General with Members as groups and individuals. Teamwork during the IPA formulation itself, including shaping the original 2010-2019 Strategic Framework (SF) also contributed to building of trust among Members themselves.

16. Examples of the increased trust include the fairly business-like and focused meetings that the IR Team observed. In this respect, the majority of Survey’s respondents considered that the current governance mechanisms allow streamlined and timely governance of the Organization. In addition, Council and its supporting committees have since the IPA produced reports in which the view of the whole is expressed rather than that of “some” or “many” Members. The divide between the OECD and the G77, although still there, is far less contentious than before the IPA. The factors contributing to these changes include: the improved functioning of the Regional Groups, most though not all of which are able to communicate a unified perspective within the GBs; the now almost monthly opportunities for Regional Groups to interact through the IMRGs convened by the ICC; and the facilitation role of the ICC.

17. The IR Team also found that expectations of the roles between the GBs and the Secretariat have been better defined and that the sense of accountability has increased. Within

¹⁰ C 2007/7A.1, paragraph 668

this improved environment, Members have been able to implement almost all of the governance-related actions contained in the IPA.

18. However, the IR Team found that in some cases, even though the specific Actions have been implemented, the result has not always been consistent with the expectation and that more needs to be done. This is the case in both of the areas related to governance within FAO, global and internal governance. The section immediately below discusses this shortfall in both areas as compared to what had been envisaged by the IEE and IPA. Thereafter, the report is organized by Governing Body so to provide a thorough discussion of these issues. Section 19 provides a synthesis of the IR Team's findings according to the impact of the IPA on both global and internal governance, as well as more general findings on the process of governance in FAO.

2.2 *The Global and Internal Functions of Governance*

19. The FAO Constitution provides two broad functions of governance in FAO: i) to develop global policy and law to guide the work of its Members, and ii) to exercise oversight and direction for the programmes of the Secretariat, monitoring the implementation of its own decisions. The IR Team is referring to these two sets of functions as **Global Governance** and **Internal Governance**. Conference has the authority to decide on matters of Global Governance and the authority to approve matters of Internal Governance based on the recommendations of the Council. All other FAO GBs "*review and recommend*" to the Council in the case of Internal Governance and to Conference, in the case of Global Governance.

20. The IEE closely examined both functions. It acknowledged that, while FAO had a prime position in global discourse at the time it was established, this had been largely superseded by other global governance mechanisms in the previous 20 years, and that FAO had become increasingly inward-looking, focusing on its own work rather than the contribution that it could make, in concert with others, to broader global policy dialogue and regulation. Nevertheless, the IEE believed that FAO's Global Governance role continued to be critical given its comparative advantages as a UN agency with convening power, its neutrality and its technical knowledge.

21. The IPA took up the IEE recommendations by adopting a number of actions to strengthen the work of the GBs in Global Governance. The very first governance-related action, Action 2.1, called on Conference, Technical Committees, Regional Conferences and Management to "*Systematically review the global situation to determine those issues requiring priority initiative for greater policy coherence and study current regulatory frameworks to determine areas requiring early action by FAO or in other fora*".¹¹ Other IPA Actions identified the Regional Conferences (RCs) and the Technical Committees (TCs) as **the** primary discussion fora for the consideration of matters of global policy and regulation, and specified that they should report directly to Conference on these matters. The IPA also noted that the Programme Committee (PC) and Council should play a role in the selection of Global Governance priorities.

¹¹ C 2008/REP, E7

22. The major issue the IR Team has identified as regards Global Governance is this: the GBs do not yet systematically review the global situation to identify areas needing greater policy coherence or that need regulatory frameworks as envisaged in the IPA. In other words, there is a need for more effective GB leadership – in particular by Conference – to identify and guide an organization-wide contribution by FAO to the larger global dialogue, for example, on climate change or on humanitarian response. Without such leadership, the RCs as well as the TCs continue to carry on policy dialogue on a wide variety of topics and, in the case of TCs, to formulate specific regulation. This is important work and should of course continue, but beyond the areas that the RCs and TCs consider important in their respective spheres, there is a need for an organization-wide FAO contribution to global policy and regulation as envisaged in Action 2.1. The IR Team proposes a relatively straightforward way in which this can be done in Section 3 on Conference.

23. With regard to Internal Governance, the IEE identified a number of areas for improvement to clarify the roles of the various GBs, reduce overlap, and streamline processes. The IPA, in turn, translated most of the IEE recommendations into Actions, which effectively lay out a stream among the GBs that guide the programming process from priority setting and planning to oversight of implementation. One of the IPA's main actions was to formally bring the RCs into the Internal Governance stream for both oversight of implementation and priority setting for future work.

24. In Internal Governance, the major issue identified by the IR Team was that the information made available to the GBs for their work is in narrative format without detailed information on results and resources and is not an effective basis for governance purposes. In addition, the diversity of participants in the RCs and TCs means that their expectations are more focused on the issue-oriented segments of the session agendas than those pertaining to their governance roles of guidance and oversight of FAO's work. The IR Team believes that without requisite results-monitoring tools the GBs will not be able to fully play their governance functions. This will be discussed in more detail in the sections on Council and its Committees as well as on the RCs and TCs.

25. One final point is worth making in this Overview section. As a result of the IPA, the Basic Texts of the Organization were changed to include a definition of Governing Bodies, which were defined as contributing within their respective mandates, to: a) the definition of the overall policies and regulatory frameworks of the Organization; b) the establishment of the Strategic Framework, the Medium-Term Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget, and c) exercise, or contribute to the oversight of the administration of the Organization.¹² The IR Team notes that point (a) in this definition may be open to misunderstanding because some may understand "overall policies" as meaning FAO's internal policies, e.g. its human resources policy. It encourages Members and the Secretariat to consider a slight change in the definition of Governing Bodies in the Basic Texts so that this is fully consistent with the Constitution and other sections spelling out responsibilities for global governance.

¹² FAO Basic Texts 2013, page 131

3 Conference

3.1 Background

26. The IEE characterized the FAO Conference as being typical of many other multilateral governing bodies, in that it was “*large and cumbersome with many activities which are largely formal and ceremonial*”.¹³ In recognition of Conference as the Organization’s highest political body, the IEE recommended maintaining its central role, and proposed changes to reinforce the substantive content of Conference sessions and capitalize on its potential as a global forum for engagement in global policy dialogue and regulatory matters.

27. The IPA Actions (2.5 – 2.11) concerning Conference were: to identify a specific theme of “vital interest” to Members for discussion during the plenary sessions; pay more attention to global policy issues and international frameworks, drawing on the recommendations of the TCs and RCs, and increase the number of side events as opportunities for informal dialogue among Members. This was in addition to its role as the final authority for the work of the Organization, including both the programme of work and budget. There were also adjustments to Conference processes, including: shifting the time of its sessions to June in the second year of the biennium; and focusing its reports on conclusions and recommendations, while providing for a verbatim record.

3.2 Main Findings

28. All IPA actions have been carried out. Conference reports focus on conclusions and recommendations, which are usefully supplemented by the verbatim record. The timing of the Conference was moved to June starting in 2011. This has worked to good effect by providing the time necessary to incorporate the decisions of the Conference into the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) so that arrangements are in place by the time the new biennium begins. It does, however, mean that the Secretariat has to prepare the PWB almost a year before it is due to be implemented as the Medium Term Plan (MTP) and the PWB must be reviewed in their final version by Council at its Spring session, i.e. 60 days before Conference, every four and two years, respectively.

29. There is a general sense that shortening the MTP/PWB discussion and approval process is not feasible. However, the IR Team observed that it could in fact be possible to move the date of the Council to just one month before Conference. Capitals will have already discussed and possibly endorsed the MTP/PWB in Council, so that the only outstanding item would be the decision on the level of the budget. As this is a political and financial decision, the IR Team would encourage the Members to consider whether 30 days is sufficient.

30. Regarding the substance of the work of Conference, Council has recommended themes for Conference sessions since 2009, which are introduced in plenary immediately after the presentation of the trend analysis contained in the State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA). Over time more and more plenary speakers have referred to the topic in their statements, even though these statements still focus more generally on the state of agriculture

¹³ IEE report, paragraph 698.

in their countries as well as FAO's role therein.¹⁴ The number of side events at Conference has increased from four in 2007 to 18 in 2013, with one of the side events directly focused on the theme of the Conference, providing this opportunity to go deeper into the topic. A large majority of Survey respondents indicated that the side events provided a good opportunity for more informal dialogue on substantive issues.

31. However, the IR Team noted that the more ambitious IPA Actions concerning an increase in attention to global policy and regulatory frameworks have not occurred as envisaged. The Chairs of the RCs and TCs personally introduce their reports to Commission I, but these reports combined contain over 40 separate policy issues per biennium. The sheer diversity of topics makes it impossible to have a coherent dialogue at Conference that could be greater than the sum of the individual reports and add value to the regionally and technically specific work. The verbatim record with regard to the RC report presentations indicates that discussion during the session was very general, and the Conference Report "endorses" the RC reports, with no note of the substance within. Discussion of TC reports tends to be more substantive, but the Commission for the most part confirms what is presented to it.

32. In 2008, at the same time that the IPA was being formulated but separately from that process, the FAO Evaluation Service carried out an independent evaluation of international instruments.¹⁵ This evaluation identified, among other issues, the need for a systematic review of the global situation as a means of prioritizing FAO's own work. This was agreed in the Management Response.¹⁶ Subsequently, Management decided not to undertake this systematic review, partly due to lack of both financial and staff resources.

33. As a result, there is a vicious circle in progress. Because of the wide variety of areas covered in the respective reports of the RCs as well as of the TCs, Conference cannot synthesize and build upon their work to identify one or maximum two organization-wide priorities. At the same time, the RCs and TCs cannot make a contribution to an organization-wide priority from their respective regional and technical perspectives – in addition to their other work in regional and technical spheres – unless they receive more concise direction from Conference. Clearly, without the basis for priority setting as called for in Action 2.1, it is impossible for the Organization to maximize its contribution to global policy coherence. On the other hand, if Action 2.1 is implemented as envisaged, the Organization would be well placed to develop organization-wide, multi-disciplinary, regionally-informed policy and regulatory contributions to the global dialogue, both within its own GBs, as well as in other fora.

34. The IR Team wishes to stress that it recognizes that there is a great deal of important policy and regulatory work underway within the Organization. The above-noted evaluation identified over 50 binding and 15 non-binding international instruments in 2009, and there are doubtless more by now. The Team is also aware of a number of examples of FAO

¹⁴ Examples of past themes are: "Improving Preparedness for and Effective Response to Food and Agricultural Threats in Emergencies", (2009), "The Vital Role of Women in Agriculture and Rural Development" (2011), and "Food Systems for Better Nutrition" (2013).

¹⁵ Independent Evaluation of FAO Corporate Strategic Objective B-1: "International instruments concerning food, agriculture, fisheries and forestry, and the production, safe use and fair exchange of agricultural, fishery and forestry goods", January 2009

¹⁶ PC 101/5 a Sup., May 2009.

partnerships with other international organizations that make valuable contributions to global policy and regulation, including those with UNEP and UNDP in UN-REDD, with the G20 regarding AMIS, and with the UN community in the definition of the post-2015 agenda. What the IPA specified, however, was that the Governing Bodies should have a more proactive role in deciding on priorities for greater policy coherence as well as areas for regulatory action, in order to focus and maximize FAO's role, and its contribution to other fora. From this perspective, the IPA actions have not had the desired effect.

3.3 *Conclusions and Recommendations*

35. The operational changes in the Conference have, on the whole, had positive effects that are widely appreciated by FAO Membership, although Members may wish to reconsider the IPA provision for a 60-day gap between Council and Conference.

36. The IPA actions have, however, not been successful in strengthening the role of the Conference as the apex body for global policy and regulation. The steps taken thus far to realign the work of the RCs, TCs and Conference to create a cohesive, functional "global governance stream," that could define, debate and approve a policy or regulatory framework across these bodies have been inadequate. The IR Team urges the Members to give further thought to this area of the IPA and how they wish to consider global governance issues in future.

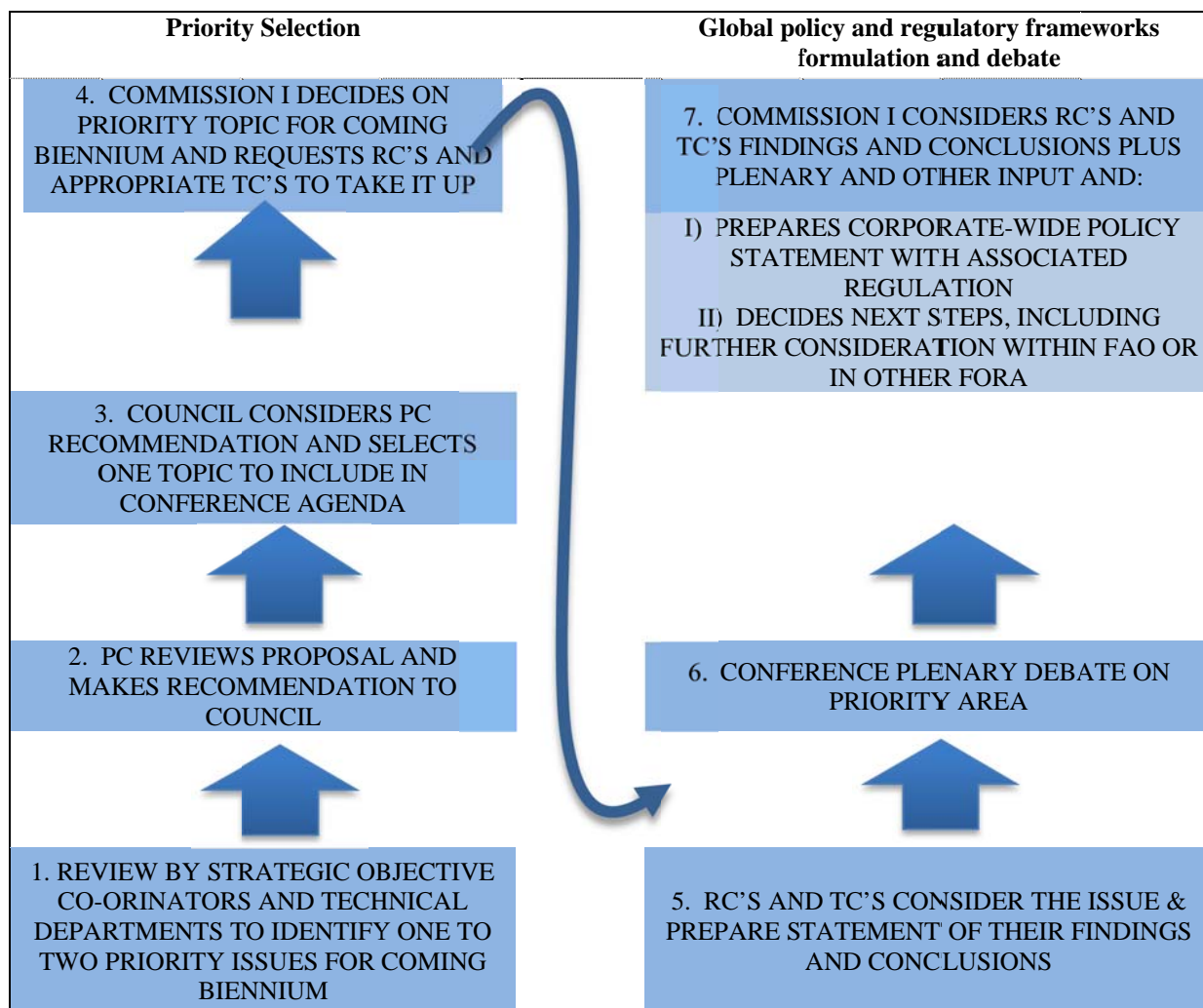
37. The IR Team recommends an approach to reinforce the FAO GBs capacity to further contribute to global policy coherence and regulation, beginning with the systematic review identified by Action 2.1. As FAO is currently structured as a matrix organization in the wake of the transformational change, the IR Team notes that there is now scope to do so without requiring significant additional resources and that the work could build on the Strategic Thinking process done for the Reviewed SF. The Strategic Objective Coordinators should, in concert with the Technical Departments, undertake the systematic review described in Action 2.1. Then, on the basis of their knowledge of FAO's present work, capacities and comparative advantages, they should propose priority areas for Organization-wide, global policy and regulation for development by FAO.

38. The proposals of the Strategic Objective Coordinators and Technical Departments would be considered by the PC, which would make a recommendation to Council. Council would then consider the PC recommendations as part of its deliberations to identify the one or two priority topics, and include the identified issues in the agenda of the next Conference. The Conference would then complete the process by requesting the RCs as well as the relevant TCs to consider the regional and technical dimensions of these issues during their next sessions, alongside their other regional and technical work. The RCs and TCs would then bring their findings and conclusions to the next Conference, where Commission I would, with the support of the Secretariat, synthesize this work and produce a regionally nuanced, technically sound FAO position to contribute to global policy dialogue to be addressed by other fora and/or address in FAO's own work, as appropriate. Commission I would also identify any proposed regulation necessary to formulate over time. In addition, the Conference plenary would also consider the same priority issue or issues during its debate. Thus, Members would have the possibility of making an input to the debate during plenary as well as during Commission I. Finally, Commission I would initiate the cycle for the next biennium by identifying the next global priority issue or issues for RC and TC consideration

based on the outcome of subsequent reviews submitted by the Strategic Objective Coordinators and Technical Departments to the PC and Council.

39. This proposal is consistent with the IPA’s original concept of FAO’s role in global governance, and would strengthen the GBs’ capacity to play a larger role in determining the Organization’s priorities in the global governance stream and ensure that FAO plays a larger, more significant role than at present. A flow chart of this process is given below. It should be noted that this proposal in no way conflicts or overlaps with the work of CFS as it is directly grounded in FAO’s present work, capacities and comparative advantages.

Box 1. The Flow of the Global Governance Stream, Biennial Cycle (24 months)



40. The IR Team’s recommendation regarding Conference is as follows:

Recommendation 1: On the review of gaps in global policy

Conference should request the FAO Secretariat to:

- i) systematically review the global situation to determine those issues requiring priority initiative for greater policy coherence and regulation, and
- ii) propose priority areas for global policy and regulation for development by FAO in order to support the GBs’ work in priority setting to guide and strengthen the Organization’s work in global governance.

4 Council

4.1 Background

41. One of the IEE's main findings is of particular relevance to the functions of the Council: *"FAO's overall governance by the member countries is failing the Organization. It has not ensured an adequate corporate strategy with realistic priorities, has not assured that means are aligned with ends and has not been measuring the Secretariat's performance against agreed goals."*¹⁷ Under the IPA, Council was assigned the major decision-making role for Internal Governance, i.e. guidance to and oversight of the work of the FAO Secretariat, subject to final approval by Conference. To minimize duplication and overlap with Conference and clearly distinguish between the Organization's two primary bodies, Council was given only a minimal role in Global Governance.¹⁸

42. More specifically, IPA actions 2.14 – 2.23 gave Council the major role in deciding and advising on the Organization's strategy, priorities, budget, overall programme of work; monitoring its own performance as well as that of other GBs, excluding the Conference; recommending the agenda of the Conference; oversight of financial and legal matters, audit, ethics, evaluation, and FAO results-based and other policies and systems; monitoring management performance against established targets; and monitoring implementation of governance decisions. Council was also given responsibility for recommending the Programme and Budget Resolution including budget level to Conference. There were also actions regarding the number and timing of meetings and that Council reports should focus on conclusions, decisions and recommendations with the verbatim providing details. Lastly, Conference had requested the CoC-IEE to recommend any changes found desirable in the size and regional representation in the Membership of the Council.¹⁹

4.2 Main Findings

4.2.1 Guidance and Oversight of Management and other Governing Bodies

43. In 2007, according to the IEE, only half of the Council "considered that they were able to adequately define budget allocations in line with programme priorities" and they did not believe they had "the means to identify and prioritize emerging needs".²⁰ The IR Team found that Council's ability to provide guidance and oversight had increased. The majority of Survey respondents agreed that Council was receiving the necessary information to exercise guidance and oversight. Interview respondents also expressed satisfaction at the Secretariat's transparency in providing the kind of information not received in the past. On the other hand, Members continued to struggle with strategy, priority-setting and results-based reporting. The IR Team noted that the Organization did not yet have a results-monitoring tool that would enable Members to gauge past performance at the Organizational Outcome level, and to better carry out their priority setting functions. The Secretariat was said to be well advanced in the development of such a tool.

¹⁷ C 2007/7A.1, p. 3 xii.

¹⁸ See Section 2 for the definition of Governance used in this report.

¹⁹ Resolution 1/2008 paragraph 5.a.i.2.

²⁰ IEE report, paragraph 692.

44. A review of Council reports since 2012 revealed a proactive Council in performing guidance and oversight. For example, Council requested improvements in the Reviewed SF and other programming documents; a clear overview of the organizational structure and of reporting lines, roles and responsibilities; information about the costs of matrix management; roles and responsibilities for Organizational Outcomes and outputs; and a note showing accountability for delivery at various levels of the results chain; among other things. For example, in its 148th session, Council requested reformulated rules for the participation of Civil Society Organizations and the private sector in FAO meetings. In its 149th session, it rejected the Finance Committee (FC) recommendation on the voting rights of Member Nations in arrears. However, based on the IR Team's discussions, there appear to be areas where Council has not been able to hold the Secretariat accountable in a meaningful way, despite repeated requests for action. Progress in gender parity and mainstreaming is perhaps the most compelling example, given both within and outside sessions. The length of time it has taken to develop a results-monitoring tool is another example.

45. In terms of management performance, Council relies on the work of both PC and FC regarding progress in implementing the MTP and the PWB through the Medium Term Review (MTR) and the Programme Implementation Report (PIR) and few items have been raised again for discussion. Indeed, most Survey respondents believed that the recommendations to Council from the PC and FC were clear and focused on policies, strategies and priorities as well as on budget and administration. However, Members also believed that duplication still exists between the Council and the Joint Committee. As part of its reflections on streamlining the governance system, the IR Team considered reducing the number of Council sessions per biennium from five to four but maintaining the frequency of PC and FC Meetings. An agenda review from 2010 to end-2014 revealed that this would negatively impact Council's oversight and guidance functions, especially given that guidance and oversight is primarily carried out during three meetings in the biennium.

46. In terms of its guidance and oversight to the work of the RCs and TCs, Council did not appear to provide additional substance to the reports presented to it by the RC Chairs at its 144th and 149th sessions, or to the TC reports at its 145th session. However, the Verbatim showed that there had been a richer discussion of the RC reports at the 149th session than what was reflected in the Council report and covered issues representative of larger concerns, such as gender, use of national expertise, and other operational issues.

47. The Council's role in overseeing the work-planning and performance of other GBs appears to have been understood as reviewing their Multi-Year Plans of Work (MYPOWs) as was done at its 148th session in December 2013. However, as discussed later in the report, the MYPOW is as yet an imperfect tool and is not useful for effective oversight. Council monitors and comments on the implementation of its own governance decisions by reviewing its previous decisions at every session, a practice that predates the IPA. Although this is an important part of Council's responsibility to hold the Organization accountable for its work it appears to be treated in a somewhat pro forma manner. For example, CL148 simply took note of the status of implementation of decisions and asked that they be implemented effectively and rapidly. Indeed, the Survey revealed that only a minority of Members agrees with the statement that 'there are sufficient measures in place to ensure the accountability of FAO management to the Governing Bodies of the Organization'.

4.2.2 Budget Level, Timing of Meetings, Council Report, Conference Agenda

48. Council's recommendation of the budget level to the Conference is one of the three outstanding IPA actions. Despite many efforts by Members as well as past ICCs, Council was unable to reach consensus in 2009, 2011, and 2013. Interviews as well as the Survey reveal that Members believe it is a political issue due to the substantial divergence between some major donors whose contribution policy is based on zero-growth, and the aspirations of other Members as well as of the Organization itself, for a budget that provides for growth. In such an environment, it will not be possible to come to a firm agreement until the statutory end of the process, i.e. at Conference.

49. The IPA decisions regarding the timing and agenda of Council meetings have been fully complied with. In 2006-2007, much of the Council report was taken up with references to what "some" or "many" members had said, making it difficult to draw conclusions and reach decisions. By June 2012 the Council Report was already shorter and focused on conclusions and decisions based on the ICC's summary, with good, succinct summaries of issues brought up in discussion. However, the IR Team noted that more recent reports may be moving too much in the direction of focus on conclusions and decisions with issues of interest left to the Verbatim from which they are unlikely to be raised again. It also noted that Members appreciate the shift to more focused Council reports although Survey respondents are less positive that the preparation of the report is an efficient process. However, Members continue to complain that documents are not available in a timely manner.

50. According to the Basic Texts, Council is meant to draw up a provisional agenda for Conference on the state of food and agriculture, "*drawing attention to specific policy issues*".²¹ It is also meant to advise on issues relating to world food and agriculture especially those "*of an urgent nature*". This was not evident in the documents reviewed by the IR Team. At its 145th session, for example, Council simply submitted to Conference the Provisional Agenda submitted to it by the Secretariat without any substantive comments.

51. Since the IPA, the better demarcation of roles and agendas between Conference and Council is well understood and, for those GBs that report to both, decision boxes at the front of documents indicate which decisions are for Council and which for Conference. Council has been careful not to trespass on Conference's prerogative to handle global policy and regulatory issues. However, if the IR Team's Recommendation 1 for FAO's role in Global Governance is adopted Council would play a somewhat more active role in Global Governance, without trespassing on Conference's prerogative. Council would propose to Conference which Global Governance priorities Conference should take up in the coming biennium as part of its Conference agenda-setting responsibilities. This would be a dramatic transformation from its present, passive consideration of 'items of interest in other fora' to a potentially lively debate on where FAO can make the more important contribution for Global Governance, on the basis of the recommendation of the PC.

4.2.3 Size and Composition of Council

52. The Council is currently composed of 49 Members. The Basic Texts provide for the membership to be divided into seven Regional Groups for the purposes of election to

²¹ FAO Basic Texts, Vol 1, p. 39, para. 1.

Council. The size and composition of the Council is the second of the three outstanding IPA actions, and remains a source of concern to three regions in particular: Europe, the Near East, and the Southwest Pacific. The number of seats allocated to each Group is given in Box 2, which shows the percentage of Members in each region out of the total FAO membership compared with the percentage of Council seats allocated to that region.

Box 2. FAO Members by Regional Groups and their representation in Council

Regional Groups	Number of Members in each Regional Group	Percentage of total FAO membership	Number of Council seats	Percentage of Council seats
Africa	49	25%	12	24%
Asia	25	13%	9	18%
Europe	48	25%	10	20%
Latin America and the Caribbean	33	17%	9	18%
Near East	21	11%	6	12%
North America	2	1%	2	4%
Southwest Pacific	16	8%	1	2%
Total	194	100%	49	100%

Source: FAO Web Site: <http://www.fao.org/unfao/govbodies/gsbhome/gsb-home/en/>, elaborated by the IR Team

53. The box shows that Asia and North America have a greater share of Council seats than their Group's corresponding weight within FAO membership, although the former does include the world's two most populous countries and both groups contain significant contributors to FAO's resources. Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Near East have a proportion of Council seats that corresponds to their Groups' share within FAO membership. Europe and the Southwest Pacific's proportion of Council seats do not correspond to their Groups' share within FAO membership. The IEE had no solutions to offer on the issue of such anomalies, which it treated quite briefly while noting other UN system organizations had their own "drawbacks and anachronisms".

54. The IEE had suggested that serious thought be given in future to replacing the Council with an Executive Board of about 30 members, that could be more focused on the operations of the Organization, and that would absorb the functions of the PC and FC. However, it emphasized the importance of creating mutual trust between Members as a first stage and recommended that the issue be reconsidered by an independent review of the governance reforms in six years' time.

55. The CoC-IEE worked hard during Open Ended Working Group II in 2009 to address the question of the size and composition of Council, offering several different configurations, but was unable to achieve consensus.²² The ICC's efforts in 2010 also failed to achieve consensus. Many Members feared that if the issue was to be reopened to address the anomalies certain regions face, other groups would argue for more seats and a larger Council.

56. In other organizations, approaches differ. For example, UNESCO has an Executive Board of 58 representing 195 members and nine associate members. UNDP's Executive

²² See especially WGII Aide Mémoires of 28 April 2008 and 18 July 2008.

Board has 36 countries serving on a rotating basis with the presidency rotating each year to a different regional group, while WFP's Executive Board also has 36 members with a bureau of five members.

57. While the IR Team found that trust among Members had increased significantly since the time of the IEE, it believed that other factors also influenced Member decisions on Council size. One of these was the perceived advantages and disadvantages of delegation to a smaller group, and the importance attached by Members to having a representative on what is FAO's 'executive' governing body. The IR Team noted that as the Regional Groups continue to grow in effectiveness and efficiency of representation, more Members may come to appreciate that their own profiles are also enhanced by working within their Regional Group rather than independently. As Regional Groups strengthen, it may become feasible in future to reduce the size of the Council.

4.2.4 The Role of Regional Groups

58. It is worth considering the role played by Regional Groups given their importance to the smooth functioning and running of the organization. Among other things, Regional Groups seek to arrive at a common position based on their review of documentation and to present that position to Council as well as to other GBs. Not all Groups are as efficient as others at doing so, raising questions about Members' ability to be accountable to each other and to their GBs. Those that do coordinate efficiently beforehand contribute to GB effectiveness. However, because they are informal, neither the work of the Groups nor their working methods are documented beyond what the Groups themselves maintain.

59. The IR Team had the opportunity to interview Members active in all the Regional Groups, to meet with some of the Groups and to interview the chairs of some Groups. During its consultations, the IR Team noted some very good practices in the way some Groups organized themselves – practices that also enable all Group members to have a representational function in one or the other of the GBs. It also noted some emerging grey areas since the Regional Conference have become governing bodies. In particular, there the IR Team found lack of clarity between the roles, relationships, and expectations of the Regional Groups and the Regional Offices. For example, should Regional Groups be in touch with Regional Offices to seek information about programmes and projects or with a central unit at headquarters? How should the RC Chairs, who are intended to be active in the inter-sessional period, relate to the Regional Representatives and to the Regional Group chairs?

4.3 Conclusions and recommendations

60. The IR Team believes there is scope for Council and its Committees to be more proactive in consolidating their own positions and in holding the Secretariat accountable. Council and its committees naturally rely on the documentation provided by the Secretariat with which they are largely satisfied. However, for the GBs to be able to fully play their oversight role, there may be occasions when they would, as called for in the IEE, benefit from independent technical expertise to assist them over and above the documentation that is available from the Secretariat.²³ Members should have access to such resources as necessary to call on independent expertise that would report to and be accountable to the Council. If

²³ IEE, Para. 764 and 776c.

Council agrees to the recommendation below, then it would take the further steps necessary to organize itself to do so, including identifying the requisite resources.

Recommendation 2: On Council's access to independent advice

Council should agree in principle to commission work on selected issues independently from the Secretariat, on a case-by-case basis, and take the further steps necessary to organize this, including identifying the requisite resources.

61. Council is proactive in providing the guidance and oversight it can, based on the documentation it receives. However, it still lacks effective results-based information to carry out these functions and hold management accountable. In part due to the changes in the SF between the time it was first adopted in 2009 and reviewed and re-adopted in 2013, it has taken time to develop the robust results-monitoring tools that can provide what Council needs.

Recommendation 3: On Council's oversight function

Council should continue to push for the kind of results-based information that will enable it to give effective guidance and oversight to FAO's work, with the active support of the PC and FC. If there is continued dissatisfaction, it may consider drawing on independent expertise for assistance.

62. Under the present circumstances, Council will not be able to make a firm recommendation on the level of the budget to Conference, and the IR Team believes it is unlikely to do so in the foreseeable future.

Recommendation 4: On Council's role in recommending the budget level

The outstanding IPA action regarding Council's recommendation of the budget level to Conference should be closed.

63. Council reports have become well focused on conclusions and decisions based on the ICC's summary. However, they may have become too concise, in part due to the lack of time to better integrate the gist of the debate into the ICC's summary. No one, including the IR Team, wants to see a return to the days of lengthy Council reports, but succinct summaries of key points raised in discussion would be important to provide the means to follow the issue over time, and to convey the substantive nature of Council deliberations. Council Members may wish to consider including short summaries of the discussion in Council reports as relevant. These could be prepared after the session with the support of one of the Vice-Chairs if need be together with the Secretariat and under the aegis of the Drafting Committee.

64. Despite intensive efforts, the Council has not been able to arrive at consensus on how to address the anomalies that exist regarding the size and composition of Council. Having observed the Council and its Committees at work, the IR Team believes there is great value in the way the smaller groups work, including the collegiality and trust that make them efficient and effective and enhance the rich, substantive nature of their discussions. At the same time, it recognizes that Members are not yet ready to delegate as fully as would be necessary for a smaller Council, although this may become possible as the role of Regional Groups continues to gain in importance. At this stage, however, and for the foreseeable

future, the IR Team does not believe that it will be possible to achieve consensus on changing the size and composition of Council. The IR Team therefore formulated the recommendation below.

Recommendation 5: On Council's size

The outstanding IPA action regarding the size and composition of Council should be closed.
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65. As previously noted, Regional Groups play an important role in the smooth functioning of FAO governance, but there are some grey areas regarding roles and expectations between Regional Groups, Regional Offices and RC Chairs. Council Members may wish to consider requesting the ICC to convene an Informal Meeting of Regional Groups to a) in discussion with management, identify and clarify these emerging grey areas, and b) exchange information on working methods and best practices among Groups in order to enhance their ability to carry out their responsibility to represent the entire group in the GBs.

5 The Independent Chair of the Council

5.1 Background

66. The IEE proposed a stronger role for the ICC with his/her own budget and a small, independent secretariat that would also support Conference, Council, Programme and Finance Committees. It strongly recommended the elimination of formal drafting committees.²⁴ The CoC-IEE did not adopt the proposal for a secretariat and decided to maintain drafting committees.

67. The position of ICC was confirmed, however, with the functions of serving as 'honest broker' in facilitating consensus between Members and the Secretariat; liaising with GB chairs and with FAO senior management as needed; calling consultative meetings with the Regional Groups; ensuring that the Council is kept abreast of developments in other fora; and driving continuous improvement of Member effectiveness. The ICC is to attend all Council sessions and spend at least six to eight months a year in Rome. The ICC qualifications remained, as in 1971: the "*ability to be objective, sensitivity to political, social and cultural differences, and appropriate experience in areas relevant to the Organization's work*".²⁵

5.2 Main Findings

68. The IR Team reviewed the work of post-IPA ICCs and had the opportunity to interact with the two previous ICCs as well as the present incumbent. The Survey showed that the majority of Members that participate in the Council are in favour of the ICC's work. These data were borne out by the IR Team's interviews, although some still questioned whether the ICC needs to spend as much time in Rome, and noted that the present DG frequently interacts directly with Members. A few felt that a chair elected at each session would be enough, noting that FAO is the only organization with an Independent Chair. The

²⁴ IEE, Para. 764 and 776c.

²⁵ IEE, Vol. II, E.

IR Team found this question had been examined in the past and that in 1971, the Conference decided to continue the institution of the ICC as “*a means of guaranteeing independence*”.²⁶ In interviews, it was noted that the ICC function was often carried out behind the scenes to resolve problems and coordinate Members. The IR Team also noted that Members felt it was important to have an ICC familiar with FAO governance and that the office did not function as well when this was not the case.

69. The IR Team found that the ICC position provided several advantages. The current ICC, for example, carried out briefings for new members, including on the history and the present status of the reform. He met with the chairs of the PC and FC prior to Council sessions and called regular meetings of the Regional Groups on specific issues, such as staff costs in the context of budget cuts, and ways to reduce translation costs. Moreover, an ICC is in a position to have an almost complete picture of the Organization and to promote coherent governance actions. The current ICC had attended all RCs as well as other GB meetings. Examples of issues where ICCs had acted as facilitator since the IPA included the CoC-IEE, Council’s recommendation on the budget level, a process to decide on international years, and field visits by Members. The current ICC took on a major role in facilitating Members’ engagement in the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), co-organized by FAO and WHO, because of concern about the state of preparations and the need to ensure that this was a member-driven process.

70. The relationship between the ICC and the Secretariat was good, and the current ICC has been meeting the DG before each Council session and as needed. The demarcation of these roles had been less clear during the previous ICC term, which had created some tensions that are no longer there. The IR Team found that the Council meeting it observed was run smoothly and in a timely fashion, and its document review indicated that this has been increasingly the practice since the IPA. The practice of the ICC providing a summary at the end of every session that serves as the basis for the drafting committee’s work was found to be a good one. However, the process did not provide the opportunity for a concise synthesis of the discussion, as noted in Section 4. Opinion amongst ICCs was mixed as to whether they needed more staff support or not.

5.3 *Conclusions and recommendations*

71. The IR Team believes that FAO should continue to have an ICC not only to sustain progress in the reforms and the trust built up among Members and between Members and the Secretariat but also to provide continuity, help to facilitate political or governance issues that may arise, and facilitate the continuing progress of governance reform. However, the ICC should not take on major functions like facilitating ICN2 without greater staff support and/or greater Member engagement as it risks overloading what is already a heavy responsibility.

Recommendation 6: On support to ICC in case of additional responsibilities

When the ICC is tasked by Members with additional responsibility, additional resources should be provided from amongst the Members.

²⁶ CCLM 86/4, May 2009.

72. If Members are willing to take on the challenge of ‘continuous improvement’ of the efficiency, effectiveness and ownership of FAO governance, the role of an ICC with a sense of continuity across time and a big picture of FAO Governing will become even more important.²⁷ The IR Team believes that additional member engagement is needed to drive governance reform and that the ICC could consider establishing task forces and working groups as proposed by the IEE in order to implement Conference decisions in 2015 on further reform.

73. The IR Team believes that the functions set out for the ICC are still valid. It shares the sense of Members that having an ICC who is familiar with FAO governance is essential for the effective functioning of this office.

Recommendation 7: On qualifications for the ICC

The Basic Texts dealing with the ICC should be revised to add the words ‘appropriate experience in the functioning of FAO governing bodies’ to the existing text “*appropriate experience in areas relevant to the Organization’s work*”.

6 The Programme Committee

6.1 Background

74. The IEE found that the Programme Committee was appropriately focused on programme matters as well as evaluations, but that the documentation provided did not allow for a focus on strategic choices. It also found that PC discussions were dominated by enquiries regarding resource allocation implications rather than broader issues of programme focus and priorities. As for evaluations, it found that the PC’s advice often reflected the political stance of various Members rather than evaluation findings.

75. IPA Actions 2.35 – 2.47²⁸ confirmed the PC’s primary scope on programme priorities, strategy, budget and evaluation, further specified responsibilities in consideration of field and decentralized work; priorities for FAO to address in developing global policy coherence and regulations; and partnership and co-ordination with other organizations for technical work. The IPA also specified a flexible number, length and timing of sessions according to need, and more joint meetings with the FC to discuss issues of strong complementarity. PC reports should focus on clear recommendations to Council, and give more attention to policies, strategies and priorities, in order to provide improved oversight and more dynamic guidance to the Council.

76. The membership of the PC was adjusted to 12 Members, plus a Chair independently elected on the basis of his/her qualifications. While Members are elected on a country basis, within the Regional Groups, the IPA specified that information on the relevant experience of all members should be provided at the time of their election by Council. All sessions of the PC were to be open to non-speaking Observers.

²⁷ IEE paragraph 763. G

²⁸ IPA Actions 2.35 – 2.47 refer to both the PC and FC.

6.2 Main Findings

77. All of the provisions regarding timing and number of meetings have been carried out and all meetings have been open to silent observers. Reports to Council have focused on decisions and clear and concise recommendations. Since 2012, PC Reports to Council have contained boxes on the cover page providing a summary and the suggested action by Council. The IR Survey indicated a substantial level of satisfaction with the impact of the IPA Actions to improve operations of the Committee.

78. Information on all candidates for election to the PC has been provided in a standard format as a LIM document to the Council session where elections take place. This provides information on the candidates' past and present functions and their participation in meetings and activities of the UN system. It does not provide more specific information on the experience of the candidates in programme matters, although in some cases this can be inferred from previous positions held. The Survey revealed some ambivalence about whether PC members have the qualifications necessary for effective functioning, which indicates the need for greater specificity with respect to necessary skills and experience for PC work. With regard to participation in the meetings themselves, the IR Team found that not all PC members were fully engaged. The Chair's efforts to form a more cohesive group by discouraging the substitution of elected members with others from their mission were appreciated. The extent of consultation by PC members with their Regional Group varied considerably. Most Groups appeared to delegate the responsibility to the elected members although in at least one there was regular consultation during PC sessions so as to provide the views of the group.

6.2.1 Programme Priorities, Strategy, Budget

79. The work of the PC has been well focused on the review of all phases of the programme cycle. While the Survey found strong agreement that the PC focuses its work on FAO's programme priorities, strategy and evaluation, only a minority of respondents believed that they were receiving documentation of sufficient breadth and quality for its work. This problem was also reflected in PC Reports to Council throughout the post-IPA period, which showed regular calls for better structured documents with more substantial analysis for lesson learning, more focus on results in the PWB and for results-based reporting during the implementation phase.

80. In addition, there have also been considerable problems with documents not being available in time for adequate preparation of the PC members. In some cases, the PC has declined to consider documents that had arrived with insufficient time for review.

81. The IR Team observed the 115th Session of the PC in May 2014, when the decisions of the Regional Conferences in terms of priority setting were presented, as well as an update on the development of the results frame for the Reviewed SF and the PIR of the previous biennium. Although this was a limited sample of PC proceedings, the Team did not find any evidence of the type of problems documented by the IEE such as inordinate focus on the financial details of specific programmes or Members expressing political rather than technical positions. It did find, however, a continuing problem with strategic focus and priority setting. The priorities reviewed by the PC as defined by the RCs were very general and often restatements of the Organization's strategic objectives rather than of more specific priorities that could be used for FAO programming. On the other hand, PC members were

clearly engaged in working with the SF and requested an additional paper to elucidate the Results Chain and FAO's accountability for results.²⁹ The IR Team also observed that the PC session was well supported by FAO staff members who were present when agenda items relevant to their responsibilities were being discussed.

82. The PC has not up to this point considered issues for global policy coherence although this was specified in the IPA Actions, in large part because the necessary information has not been available. If Members decide to implement Recommendation 1 in Section 2 regarding the global governance component of the GBs' work, the PC would be best placed to consider the outcome of the review on global priorities given it has the most detailed and broadest information on programme matters.

6.2.2 *Evaluation*

83. Almost half of the PC's agenda items during the biennium concern evaluation, with the majority being individual evaluation reports and their follow up. The Survey indicated that the majority of the respondents believe that the quality and number of evaluations reviewed enable the GBs to carry out their oversight work. Overall satisfaction with the evaluation review process was also mentioned in interviews, although the IR Team also found that PC members are cognizant of the need to be more "strategic" in their consideration of evaluations in order to use them as a source for maximum contribution to their oversight of the Organization. There is also a sense that there is scope for improvement in what the PC reviews in order to increase its value to the work of the Organization more generally. At present there is little attempt to draw the connection between the evaluations and the SF and its Organizational Outcome Results. With the introduction of a new SF in 2010 and its revision in 2013 this is of necessity a work in progress. However, now that the Reviewed SF is in place until 2019, it should be possible to align the programme of evaluations considered by the PC to the Organizational Outcomes.

84. The IR Team also noted that the provision that evaluation reports be reviewed by the PC and audit reports by the FC is not always consistent with their respective responsibilities for programmatic and financial/administrative oversight. A recent example comes from the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Sub-regional Offices for Asia and the Pacific, which recommended that human resource officers report to headquarters and not to the Regional Office, a recommendation that management rejected and that the PC only mildly challenged. Given the implications for the risk control framework, this issue should have been more appropriately tackled by the FC. The FC might also have assented in management's position, but it would have been in a better place to discuss the relevant aspects of the issue. In addition, the IR Team notes that audit capping reports contain information of importance to both the PC and the FC that each should review.

6.3 *Conclusions and recommendations*

85. The PC is seen to be functioning well, providing concise but substantive reports to the Council for its consideration. There is however room for improvement in meeting the intention of the IPA, for the PC to "*give more attention to policies, strategies and priorities in*

²⁹ This paper, CL149/LIM/6, was produced and available at the next Council session.

order to provide improved oversight and more dynamic guidance to the Council.”³⁰ Indeed, as noted earlier in Section 4 on Council, the IR Team believes that despite their increasing effectiveness and efficiency, the PC, the FC, CCLM, and Council are not yet sufficiently proactive in following up where implementation is not satisfactory. This has major implications for their ability to hold management accountable. In Section 4 on Council, the IR Team recommended that the GBs access independent expertise as needed over and above the documentation that they receive from the Secretariat as one way to bolster their accountability function. Below, the IR Team draws attention to another method that could help to bolster the GBs’ accountability function.

86. The IR Team believes that part of the reason for the GBs’ insufficient ability to hold management accountable is the way their session agendas are currently structured. This has not allowed them to focus their attention on selected strategic or cross-cutting issues from one session to the next in order to develop their own knowledge of how such issues are treated by the Organization and to therefore interact more meaningfully with Management. The PC might decide to track, as a cross-cutting issue, the strategies the Organization employs to support policy formulation in programme countries. This would not entail too much additional work by Members. Rather, during its sessions, the PC would glean from the session documentation any information on the Organization’s experience on policy formulation in implementation. It would thereby build up its knowledge of how the Organization does, or does not, address the issue. In due course, the PC may form a view to recommend to Council. An example of a more specific issue that might be tracked in this way is the use of national professionals and any constraints to their effectiveness. Such ‘tracking’ would be in addition to standing agenda items. It would not preclude Members from presenting their or their Regional Groups’ views during the meeting on all agenda items. In the view of the IR Team, the value of tracking is twofold: it provides the opportunity for the PC to be proactive in setting a direction for part of its work and that the sustained attention to a given item will increase the PC’s ability to address it in more depth. Both are important in improving accountability. The issues identified for tracking could be recorded in the MYPOW. The IR Team also believes the FC and CCLM would also benefit from adopting this approach and includes them in this Recommendation.

Recommendation 8: On tracking issues over time

The PC, FC, and CCLM should set time aside on the agenda to identify cross-cutting or strategic issues to track over time as part of their review of documentation provided for agenda items in its sessions. This work would be done on an informal basis either by Members who volunteer or as a group. When appropriate, a decision would be made on whether it would be useful to formalize a recommendation to Council on the matter.

87. In addition, more results-based documentation in strategy setting and implementation would substantially improve the PC’s capacity for oversight and guidance, as per Recommendation 3. Likewise, the PC should be more strategic in the evaluation information it reviews in order to be able to relate more directly to the policies and strategies of the Organization, as will be discussed further in Section 15 on Evaluation.

³⁰ IPA Action 2.40(v)

88. The IR Team makes a specific recommendation to the PC regarding candidate qualifications below, which also applies equally forcefully to the FC and CCLM. The IR Team also draws attention to the need for each of the PC and FC to deal with the segments of evaluations and audit that relate to their work, as discussed above.

Recommendation 9: On qualifications of PC, FC and CCLM candidates

The Qualifications Statement for PC, FC, and CCLM candidates should be modified to include a section with specific information on previous education and/or experience in the respective GBs' areas of work. Regional Groups should continuously engage in a search for potential candidates with the requisite expertise in Rome and in capitals.

Recommendation 10: On the review of evaluation and audit reports

The PC and FC should each have the responsibility to review the evaluation and audit information relevant to the scope of work of each body. The PC and FC Chairs should jointly decide whether to refer items to the individual committees or to the Joint Meeting.

7 The Finance Committee

7.1 Background

89. The IEE found that the FC was “under-informed”; representation was unbalanced; better documents were needed; the low capacity of Council placed an additional burden; the requirement for technical expertise had “*largely ceased to be applied*”; it had an “*extremely crowded agenda*”; and duplication with the Joint Meeting still occurred.³¹

90. Specific elements of IPA actions 2.37ii – 2.47iii tasked the FC with finance, administration, services, and human resources, and called for revisiting the criteria regarding which WFP documents to review. The IPA also called on Council to elect chairs on the basis of their individual qualifications, with a vice-chair to serve as needed and to ensure that Members' representatives had the necessary technical qualifications. Meetings were to be of flexible duration with a minimum of four a year and make clear recommendations to Council. Membership was increased to 12 and non-speaking observers were allowed.

7.2 Main Findings

91. The Committee meets flexibly as set out by the IPA. The majority of Survey respondents believed that the number and length of sessions were sufficient to fulfil the Committee's mandate. The major agenda headings have not substantially changed since 2006 although sessions now begin with a report on the financial position of the organization. The Committee's schedule remains crowded. As requested by the IPA, the Committee discussed the criteria on the basis of which to review WFP documentation in collaboration with WFP.³² This was done between May 2010 and June 2011, and it was decided to remove just one document - the WFP Strategic Plan - because it had no financial implications.³³

³¹ Paras. 147.d, 705, and 705b. The IEE also applied many of these findings to the Programme Committee.

³² FC 133 report, paragraphs 52 - 55

³³ FC 139 report, paragraphs 58 – 61.

92. The IR Team had the opportunity to observe the 154th session of the Finance Committee. There were 22 items on the agenda, of which only two were process items that could be dealt with quickly. Nevertheless it concluded its discussions on time, with the exception of a late closed-door session on an agenda item with political dimensions. The IR Team discussed with Committee Members ways in which the agenda could be reduced to enable more substantive discussion of major items, but it proved impossible to identify such items, partly because Members would not be “comfortable” if there were too many items for information only. Indeed, given the FC’s role and the number of areas to be covered, it was difficult to see how the agenda could be less crowded.

93. At its 154th session the FC functioned well as an oversight mechanism of the areas within its mandate based on the information it was given. As noted in Section 4, Members still need a results-monitoring tool to support their guidance and oversight. Despite this constraint, about half the Members asked substantive oversight questions engaging the Secretariat in a solid discussion of the issues raised in various agenda items and a quarter of the remaining Members posed useful questions. Only one Member raised questions directly related to the concerns of their country. Also, only one member spoke regularly on behalf of the Regional Group while two others referred occasionally to their Group. In a few instances time management could have been better.

94. The IR Team noted good practices during the session, for example the request to organize informal briefings on complex issues such as staff-related liabilities and the financial framework for cost recovery. The IR Team paid close attention to the relationship between the Committee and the Secretariat, noting the professionalism and trust that prevailed on both sides. The IR Team was told that before 2008-09 “the Secretariat was trying to hide things. Not now”.

95. At the 154th session the Team noted that a Member conveyed the thanks of the entire Regional Group for the quality of the documentation. However, the Survey revealed that less than half of respondents found the documentation received to be of sufficient breadth and coverage – largely because many respondents replied that they did not know whether it was or not. This raised questions for the IR Team regarding the qualifications of some FC Members. Meanwhile, the timeliness of documentation received the Survey’s highest negative assessment.

96. As per the IPA, the number of FC Members was increased to 12 plus the chair, which most Survey respondents believed was an adequate size for effective work; yet only a minority of Survey respondents believed that Members’ professional qualifications enabled the FC to work effectively. The IR Team reviewed the resumés Members had submitted to the 147th Council. As the case with the PC (see Section 6), the format used did not provide a space for candidates to list experience directly relevant to the FC. From the information that was provided, only four contained relevant experience in finance or administration. The Council verbatim showed no discussion of the candidates’ technical qualifications and as the number of candidates was exactly equal to the number of slots, the Committee Members and chair were elected by acclamation.

97. The FC Report submitted to the 149th Council was a faithful rendition of the 154th meeting observed by the IR Team, and was succinctly and clearly presented. It was also shorter than the reports produced in 2006. However, the IR Team believes that the Report’s executive summary should have noted critical issues discussed even though no specific

conclusion was reached, in this case the seriousness of the after-service medical coverage and the fact that an informal meeting had been requested. Instead, the Council spent some time discussing some of the issues the FC had already thoroughly thrashed out.

98. A significant number of staff were present in the FC during the 154th session and effectively supported the work of the Committee. Several silent observers were also present. The IR Team was told that there is interest in attending it because the work is done before it reaches Council, where little additional detail can be gained.

7.3 Conclusions and recommendations

99. Based on its observation of the 154th session of the FC, the IR Team found it a strong, well-functioning Committee, with engaged members and a dedicated Secretariat. It has moved a long way from the IEE findings in particular as regards key issues such as trust, transparency, documentation, and capacity. In the Survey responses, the FC gave itself high marks for focusing on the financial implications of the SF, the MTP and PWB, giving guidance on budgetary transfers, investments and reserve funds, clear recommendations to the Council.

100. However, the IR Team has some concerns, the substance of which has been discussed in Sections 4 and 6. Specifically, it notes here that, the recommendations made in Sections 4 and 6 apply equally to and should be taken up by the FC: Recommendation 3 regarding the results-monitoring tool; Recommendation 8 regarding identifying and tracking key cross-cutting or strategic issues; Recommendation 9 regarding the qualifications of FC candidates; Recommendation 10 regarding the FC's review of sections of evaluations relating to its mandate.

101. Although the Committee plays a critical role in effective governance that justifies the significant Member and staff time invested, ways should continue to be explored to increase efficiency and reduce the time and possibly even the number of sessions. The IR Team believes that the ways to do so are perhaps best explored by the Members themselves. FC Members may wish to consider tasking volunteers to track the Committee's working methods and agendas over the course of the year and report at regular intervals on possible ways to achieve further efficiency. The FC may also wish to consider assigning specific time allotments to agenda items. This would also help to distinguish between key items for discussion and less important ones and would assist the Chair in reminding Members to focus their comments.

8 The Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees

8.1 Background

102. The IEE noted that: duplication still occurred between the Joint Meeting and the PC and FC; there was less partisan debate in the two Committees than the Council but this "*tended to break down in the Joint Meeting*"; that documents were often distributed late and not read; and that late translations placed "*a few Members at real disadvantage*".³⁴ IPA

³⁴ IEE report, paragraph 705c and 706.

2.39iv said that the PC and FCs should have more joint meetings that focus on areas of overlap and/or where the two Committees' contribution had strong complementarity.

8.2 Main Findings

103. The IR Team found a mixed picture in seeking to assess the extent of duplication between the Joint Meeting and the PC and FC. On the one hand, Survey responses indicated that most Members felt that the Joint Meeting did add value to the separate meetings of the PC and FC and the interviews indicated that there is now less repetition across the Committees, particularly as Members no longer made statements at each meeting and repeated them at both. It was also felt that the process of going through the PC and FC and then the Joint Meeting added to the "political weight" of the recommendations addressed to the Council, and that the Joint Meeting had reduced the workload of the PC and FC, which was described this as "a real value-added of the reform".

104. On the other hand, according to some of the IR Team's interviews, its own observations, as well as comments made during its presentation to the May 2014 Joint Meeting, the risk remains that sessions repeat the separate committee deliberations without adding value. The analysis of agenda items of Joint Meetings since 2006 indicated that 68% had not been previously discussed by the PC and FC, but in 2012/13, the ratio was closer to 50%.

105. The IR Team was able to observe the May 2014 Joint Meeting session, where the review of MTP progress was on all three agendas. In this case, as each Committee considered distinct portions of the report, the Joint Meeting session was a 'report back' by each Committee and did not add value beyond what was concluded in the separate Committees. On the other hand, the PIR was only considered during the Joint Meeting. Many salient comments were made on both programme and finance/administration matters contained in the report, but it was not possible during the hour devoted to this item to come to an understanding of the results achieved during the past two years' work, or the lessons to be learned from it. This represented an opportunity lost for the more profound study of a key programme document. Indeed, treating an issue in the Joint Meeting alone would reduce the time and depth given to its consideration, but closer observation is needed to identify the extent of duplication in bringing issues discussed in both FC and PC to the Joint Meeting.

106. In addition, the DG addressed the meeting. Members expressed appreciation of the informal nature of his statement. However, only two questions were taken from the floor after the responses by the two Committee Chairs, which did not provide for an equally informal exchange with the Members.

8.3 Conclusions and suggestions

107. In its observation of the May 2014 Joint Meeting, the IR Team found little evidence of the partisan nature of the debate referred to by the IEE. It also believes that the effort to find the appropriate balance between the value-added or otherwise by discussing a critical agenda item only at the Joint Meeting is not easy to achieve. The Chairs of the Committees will need to continue to consider each agenda item individually, in order to reach a good solution. Members may also wish to consider scheduling Joint Meetings on an 'as needed' basis.

108. As part of its effort to identify ways in which the FAO governance system could be ‘lightened’, the IR Team considered whether the Programme and Finance Committees should take their work directly to Council. However, because it in general agrees with Members that the Joint Meeting has the potential to add value to the work of the two Committees, it did not pursue this option. The IR Team also considered whether the Joint Meeting could represent the nucleus of an Executive Board, as discussed by the IEE and indeed whether it could replace Council. While it believes the latter might make sense from an efficiency and effectiveness perspective, the IR Team understands that it is not politically possible, at least at present. Nevertheless, the IR Team believes there is more scope for streamlining the flow of work across the two Committees, the Joint Meeting and Council: given its limited observations it is not in a position to make specific suggestions and believes that Members are best placed to do so. Members may wish to consider tasking one or more of their members to observe the flow of work across from the two Committees to Council on an on-going basis and identify areas of duplication, overlap and little value added for consideration and decision by the Joint Meeting and Council.

109. In addition, and as presented in Recommendation 10, the IR Team believes that the Joint Meeting could play an important role in reviewing evaluations and audit capping reports that cut across the work of the PC and FC, with the PC and TC chairs deciding which can be discussed by each committee separately and which should go to the Joint Meeting. These reports provide the most important insights into the work of the organization and a joint review would ensure that key oversight issues are not overlooked.

9 Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters

9.1 Background

110. IPA actions with regard to the CCLM focused on enhancing the ‘professionalization’ of the Committee. As with the other Committees of the Council, countries nominate their representative and are expected to propose representatives with the necessary qualifications in the legal domain. Each region has one member on the CCLM, while the chair is elected separately on the basis of his/her individual qualifications. Members are elected for a term of two years, and the possibility of re-election was limited to two terms in total. The Committee was also opened up to non-speaking observer Members.

9.2 Main Findings

111. The IPA actions for the CCLM have been carried out. The number of members was increased and the meetings are now open to non-speaking observers, which is seen as a good practice by the majority of Survey respondents. The CCLM meets typically twice per year, prior to the meetings of the PC and FC, but they can, and did meet more frequently in 2008/09 or for longer sessions in 2012/13, as their work programme is on an ‘as-needed’ basis rather than standing agenda items. Initially the Committee did not see the need to formulate a MYPOW because it had no set agenda items; however one was later produced as a means of tracking their work methods.

112. The qualifications statements for proposed country representatives on the CCLM were limited to information on present and previous functions of the nominee, as well as

participation in meetings or activities of the UN system. Three of the representatives had held legal functions but there may be other representatives who had related experience that was not picked up in the information categories contained in the statements. Less than half the Survey respondents agreed that the professional qualifications of CCLM members allowed it to work effectively, although the interviews indicated a sense that a legal background was not absolutely necessary to fulfil the functions of a CCLM member. The Basic Texts themselves specify that representatives should have shown a continued interest in the objectives and activities of the Organization and have participated in Conference or Council session and, as far as possible, have competence and expertise in legal matters.³⁵

9.3 Conclusions and recommendations

113. The re-organization of the CCLM in line with the IPA Actions has expanded the representation of the group, which seems to function well. Two of the recommendations the IR Team made in previous sections apply equally to the CCLM: Recommendation 8 regarding identifying and tracking key cross-cutting or strategic issues; and Recommendation 9 regarding the qualifications of CCLM candidates.

10 Technical Committees

10.1 Background

114. The IEE noted that the TCs play a very important role as FAO's main fora for achieving policy coherence particularly in terms of global policy issues. It also found that the TCs as a whole tended to "... *focus excessively on the work of the FAO Secretariat and give inadequate attention to driving a global policy agenda*".³⁶

115. The IPA focused actions 2.56–2.63 on the following: a dual reporting line to Council on budget, priorities and programme strategies; and to Conference on global policy and regulation; chair and co-chairs to remain active in the inter-sessional period and with a more pro-active role in developing the Committees' agendas and role; more use of side events and greater access to the Committees by NGOs and the private sector; inclusion of livestock as a standing agenda item in COAG; closer collaboration among CCP, WTO and the Common Fund for Commodities; and a stronger role for the CFS on global policy issues.³⁷

116. As noted in Section 1, the IR Team had the opportunity to observe one full meeting of COFO and selected sessions of COFI and to interview participants in these two fora as well as in relevant departments in the Secretariat. However, it was not able to study the work of the TCs as intensively as it did for other GBs, in particular the RCs, as noted in Section 11 below.³⁸

³⁵ Basic Texts, Rule XXXIV.1, p 63, 2013 edition.

³⁶ IEE, para 708 re the Technical Committees.

³⁷ As noted in the Introduction, CFS, which is no longer an FAO governing body, is not part of this Review.

³⁸ During the data-gathering phase of the IR Team, only COFO and COFI 2014 took place.

10.2 Main Findings

117. Virtually all IPA actions on the TCs have been implemented, including the IPA actions tailored to specific TCs. For example, CCP collaborates and exchanges information with WTO and other trade organizations, although ‘joint work’ does not appear to be easy given the different mandates of the concerned agencies. Livestock is a standing agenda item for COAG, although this predates the IPA as it has been on the agenda since 2005. The chairs of all TCs report presented their reports at Council 145th session. Overall, the TC reports have become more clear and straightforward since the IPA. However, while the 2012 and 2014 COFO reports clearly addressed recommendations related to FAO’s work to Council and those related to global policy and regulation to Conference, this is still a work in progress for the other TCs.

118. In general, the reforms have been appreciated, both within the Secretariat and among Members. According to the Survey and interviews, participants in COFI tended to be the most positive in their assessment of the changes, with CCP participants being the least satisfied. The most negative opinions were expressed on the usefulness of MYPOW and the timeliness of documents submitted for discussion, in particular by COAG and CCP.

119. The TCs have introduced a number of additional changes in practice, including revised rules and procedures establishing Bureaux for inter-sessional work to assist the Chair in his/her functions for preparation of the next session as well as other tasks. The TCs have also all agreed to modify existing procedure to change Chairs at the end of each session rather than at the beginning, so that the incoming Chair can effectively guide preparations for the next session. The majority of Survey respondents who participated in COFI and COFO appreciated the added value of the Bureaux to the functioning of the Committees, the inclusion of issues of key interest for the Members in the agenda, the duration of the sessions, and the quality of the report.

120. All these actions have had a positive impact on stronger participation by Members in the inter-sessional period and in the agenda setting of the following session of the Committee. The Bureaux have been heavily engaged in the agenda setting process for the sessions in 2014, although the extent of inclusion of regional concerns varied. The number of meetings in the inter-sessional period also varied: in the period 2012-2014, COFO held three meetings while COFI met eight times. All TCs made effective efforts to reduce costs by taking advantage of other travel opportunities as well as video and teleconference facilities. In the case of COFI, extra-budgetary resources were also made available to support the Bureau. However, in its observations of COFO and COFI, the IR Team found that more needs to be done to clarify the role and responsibilities of the Bureaux vis-à-vis the broad constituency of both COFI and COFO and the work of the FAO Secretariat itself.

121. Although collaboration among TCs has grown, particularly in regard to the discussion and sharing among Secretaries of rules of and procedures, the IR Team found that further efforts would be useful. For example, a large minority of Survey respondents believe that there is overlap between COAG and CCP. TC Secretaries are among the first to agree that there is room for improvement, in terms of sharing best practices and on substantive issues. The Reviewed SF can promote this direction. In addition, COFO has a standing agenda item on “Decisions and recommendations of FAO Bodies of interest to COFO”. This could be adopted by all TCs so as to facilitate better understanding of how FAO works and identify opportunities for synergies and collaboration.

122. Another issue that could benefit from greater collaboration among TCs is the functioning of their dual reporting line to Conference and Council as established by the IPA. With the exception of COFO, there still seems to be some lack of clarity among the TCs and their Secretaries as to the dividing line between policy and regulatory matters on the one hand and programme matters on the other.

123. In both the interviews and Survey, Members raised some concerns regarding the relevance and usefulness of CCP. Some were in favour of keeping CCP as a think-tank on agriculture and trade that raises understanding on the issues prepares Members for participation in other fora. The other point of view believes that CCP does not have much to add to what is better discussed elsewhere and in particular in WTO. The Membership of CCP is the smallest among TCs; at the same time, costs for servicing CCP appeared to be similar to those of other TCs. It should be noted that there has been considerable work on reform of CCP both before and since the IPA.

10.2.1 TC Contributions to Global Governance

124. Each of the TCs has a different membership and plays a different role at the global level. COFI is the recognized global body for policy and regulation for fisheries and aquaculture; CCP operates as a think-tank on global trade policies; and although attendance is high at both COAG and COFO, they are not the only global fora in their respective fields. These differences are important as regards the way they contribute to Global Governance.

125. A large majority of Survey respondents that had attended TCs agreed that the Committees have made important contributions to Conference on global policy issues. The approach of the TCs varied in the way that they addressed the complex issues on their respective agendas. In some cases, these discussions and negotiations concluded in the recommendation of global regulatory frameworks, such as the International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides, approved in 2013, and the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, which will be submitted to Conference in 2015.

126. In other cases, such issues were ‘passed on’ to CFS, which has since its reform taken over much of the global governance debate. For example, the Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure were initiated in 2006 at the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Agricultural Development (ICAARD), discussed by COAG in 2007, and finalized and endorsed by the CFS in 2012 and “noted” by FAO Conference in 2013.

127. TC reports are presented to Commission I of Conference, where they are actively discussed by Members. They are invariably endorsed, which marks the endpoint of their consideration by Conference.

128. In Section 3, the IR Team has proposed a systemic way for FAO to track and select one or two organization-wide priorities that Conference would then ask the TCs and RCs to examine from the technical and regional perspectives alongside their other technical and regional work. The RCs and TCs would bring their findings and conclusions back to Conference for global policy or proposed regulation as deemed appropriate (see the flow chart in Section 3.)

10.2.2 TC Contributions to Internal Governance

129. Only a small majority of Survey respondents agreed that TCs have made significant contributions to FAO Council on programmatic and budgetary issues, and even fewer considered that the decisions made in the TCs had any impact on the work of the Organization. This confirmed the IR Team's observation about the limited oversight and guidance role played by the TCs on the work of the Organization. Indeed, the IR Team's interactions with COFO participants revealed their limited awareness and knowledge about the role of COFO in FAO's governance despite the fact that COFO has the longest standing Bureau, established well before the IPA. Similarly, interventions from the floor at COFI during the discussion of the MYPOW clearly indicated widespread lack of clarity about COFI's in FAO governance.

130. The TCs' agendas and discussions make no reference to priority setting based on the regular budget resources available. This undoubtedly contributes to transforming the discussion on programmes into a long shopping list. Although TCs do not have the mandate to decide the share of financial resources assigned to their respective technical sectors, this missing information on resources undermines the effectiveness of the TCs in providing guidance to the Secretariat on priorities and thus in playing their Internal Governance role. The segments of TC reports of concern to Council have also reflected some lack of clarity between Internal and Global Governance role; the distinction appeared to be work in progress, with room for further fine-tuning and discussion on what belongs to Council and what to Conference.

10.3 Conclusions and recommendations

131. The TCs' role in developing global policy and regulatory frameworks has been mostly the purview of COFI and COAG, although less so in COAG given the enhanced CFS role. COFO contributes to a smaller extent and it is beyond the scope of CCP to do so. TCs may wish to consider holding ad-hoc ministerial meetings, as suggested by the IEE, at the closure of those sessions where policy and regulatory frameworks are scheduled for endorsement. This would help to give TC findings more political weight and enable them to reach broader constituencies before they reach Conference.

132. The main issue facing the TCs is the tension created by their need for a broad technical constituency to play their role in Global Governance and the fact that this constituency is not well briefed or engaged in the Internal Governance role of oversight and guidance of the Secretariat's work. The profile of participants, mostly from capitals in the case of COFI and COFO with a certain degree of turn-over, and their sheer numbers, do not enable the Internal Governance function as they not all follow FAO's work on a regular basis within their countries. An additional factor is the documentation made available, and how the items are introduced in the TCs. Two options are posed to modify the format of the TC sessions:

- Holding a three-day high-level technical meeting for debate and exchange followed by a ministerial segment that focuses on priority setting for FAO and, whenever necessary, endorses the technical, policy and regulatory frameworks for the whole constituency.
- An alternative to the introduction of the standing ministerial segment could be the organization of ad-hoc ministerial meetings in closure to those sessions of TCs that have main policy and regulatory frameworks to be endorsed. This might be a

cost-effective measure that would help in containing the standard length of all TC sessions.

133. The role of the TC is to review the work of the Organization and identify priorities for future work and, as stated in the IPA, to make recommendations to Council in this regard. The question has been posed as to whether the TCs have a role in Internal Governance beyond the point of making these recommendations and whether the TC bureaux, in the inter-sessional period, could exercise oversight and make recommendations on FAO priorities. This proposal raises questions as to whether a bureau can be empowered to make governance decisions on behalf of the TC as a whole and if so empowered, whether it should report to another GB when the TC is not in session.

134. The IR Team is not in a position to make precise recommendations in this regard, but there are a few options for Members to consider:

- Keep the present arrangements, but make realistic budget information available up front during the TC discussions on priorities as has been recommended in the case of RCs, so as to increase the TCs influence on the final programme by keeping their recommendations within the expected level of resources;
- A more active role could be considered for Bureaux, as is the case with CFS: this would require the whole constituency during the plenary sessions to agree on the Bureaux' mandate to represent the membership during the inter-sessional period, and, as noted above, also work out the relationship of the TC Bureau with PC and Council. The Bureaux' relationship with the Secretariat would also have to be carefully managed to avoid crossing of the line by the GBs into the management role that is the purview of the Secretariat.

Recommendation 11: On TC's scope of action on Internal Governance

Based on the advice of the CCLM, and based upon the above-noted options, the Council and the TCs should clarify the possible role and authority of TC Bureaux during the inter-sessional period.
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11 Regional Conferences

11.1 Background

135. The IEE found that the RCs had a marginal role in providing contributions of real value to FAO governance as their agendas were centrally planned in HQ and the sessions were dominated by formal speeches with few concrete results. The RCs directed their conclusions to the DG, who had discretionary power as to their use, although he was required to report to Conference and Council on how far they were taken into account in framing the PWB. Thus, the IEE did not view the RCs as cost-effective, but it did see their potential value if they were re-organized and integrated into the governance stream to provide insights into regional interests and priorities.

136. The IPA accordingly decided that the RCs should form a part of the governance stream, with responsibility for: developing issues for regional policy coherence and regional perspectives on global policy issues and regulation; and reviewing and advising on the FAO programme for the region as well as the overall FAO programme as it affects the region. The IPA also provided for several changes in the process of organizing the RCs: full consultation with Members on agendas, dates and duration for the biennial meeting; the Chair and

rappporteur should remain in office between sessions and present the RC report to Council and Conference; sessions should be held in tandem with other regional intergovernmental bodies, in so far as possible; documents and reports should be more focused; and rules of procedure should be developed.³⁹

137. Because the integration of the RCs into the governance stream was one of the major changes among the IPA Actions, the IPA made specific mention of the need to assess their role and functioning as a part of this Independent Review of all of IPA Actions. The IR Team, dedicated specific attention to the RCs and observed all 2014 meetings, including the iNARC.

11.2 Main Findings

11.2.1 The organization of the RCs

138. Changes in the process for RC session preparation have made a substantial difference in the regional ownership of the RCs by both the Members and the Regional Offices (ROs). In keeping with FAO's policy on decentralization, ROs assumed the prime responsibility for the organizational and conduct of the sessions, with the support of the Office for Support to Decentralization (OSD). In keeping with the IPA provisions noted above, ROs officially consult with Members on the agenda and other organizational aspects in the national capitals. The Regional Groups in Rome are involved in the initial discussion of the agenda, facilitate agreement on it with their capitals, and are engaged in other aspects of the process.

139. RC Chairs now remain in place during the inter-sessional period, and have, since 2010, personally introduced the RC reports to both Council and Conference. However the impact seems to be low. There is little discussion in plenary after these introductions. In the case of Council, the reports are always endorsed and referred to the Secretariat for use in preparing the next PWB.

140. Some of the Chairs have also been active during the inter-sessional period as advocates for the recommendations of the RCs among Members. For example, the ARC Chair recently made a formal representation to the African Union Heads of State meeting on the results of the 2014 session. While none of the RC sessions since 2010 have been held in tandem with the meetings of other regional organizations, LARC has close linkages with the Community of Latin America and the Caribbean States and ARC with AU's New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In both cases the RCs view the strategic framework of that organization as the guiding frame for FAO's work in the region, and representatives of these groups participate in the conferences.

141. The ERC has found it necessary to establish its own rules and procedures, in order to clarify the relationship between the European RC and the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA). For the normal conduct of their meetings, the other RCs rely on Article XXXV of the General Rules of the Organization, and also draw on a Manual issued by the

³⁹ Except where indicated, the term Regional Conference refers to the RCs for Asia and the Pacific, Africa, Europe, Near East and Latin America. Where specific reference is made to the informal North America Regional Conference (iNARC), this is noted accordingly.

Secretariat in 2013. If, however, the Chairs should become more active during the inter-sessional period, separate rules and procedures may be required to codify what their responsibilities are vis-à-vis the RC membership and the Secretariat, as well as other operational matters such as financing.

142. All RC sessions have senior officer and ministerial segments, and continue to follow the standard plenary format of presentation from the podium and subsequent discussion. There were some notable deviations from this format, particularly in APRC, ARC, and LARC. The IR Team found that Members especially appreciated the sessions that included substantive panel discussions and roundtables as well as small group discussions and subsequent report-back to the plenary. These more informal sessions included speakers from among the delegates to the meeting as well as from other organizations and, in one case, young agricultural entrepreneurs. Some delegates still felt that there was not enough time for interaction in these events, and it is clear that there is scope for even greater exchange of views than the standard plenary sessions.

143. It is worth noting that the 2014 ERC decided that the European Commission Agriculture would no longer be held back-to-back with the ERC, which was neither a 'standard' senior officers meeting nor a fully technical meeting, and duplicated much of the ministerial meeting. The hope is that this will enable the Commission to better focus on its technical functions, and its conclusions regarding priorities for co-operative work in the region would subsequently be considered by the RC as should be the case for all regional technical commissions. CSO consultations prior to the RCs are now a standard feature. In most of the RCs, they were also invited to speak during plenary on the agenda items. The reflection of their views in the final report differs across regions and between RCs over time.

144. Since the decision was taken to designate the RCs as formal governing bodies, the North America region has established an informal RC. Meetings have been held biennially since 2010, with the organization being undertaken by the Members themselves without financial or staff support from FAO. With the exception of the North America Liaison Office, FAO personnel participate by video-conference or telephone. The iNARC agendas focus on priority-setting rather than the broader range of work of the other RCs. Their reports are now provided to the PC and Council and the Chair introduces their report in Council and Conference.

145. The IR Team noted some anomalies in the organization of the RCs. The oversight function of each RC should pertain to those countries served by the Regional Office concerned. However, invitations to the RCs are on the basis of the Regional Groups as organized in Rome for the purposes of election to the Council representation there. In several regions – Africa, Near East, Asia, Europe – the RO coverage, RC participation and Regional Group membership is not one and the same. This disjoint has not yet posed a major problem because the RC Internal Governance functions, and priority-setting in particular, are still a work in progress. However, as RCs' guidance and oversight of FAO's work becomes more focused, it will be necessary for RC participants themselves to recognize this distinction, and that recommendations with regard to FAO programme matters are made by those within the purview of the RO rather than by the group at large.

146. With the exception of respondents from Europe and the Southwest Pacific, the IR Survey indicated a high level of satisfaction with the RCs as fora for consultation in the region on FAO policy and operations. There was also a strong sense that regional issues were

better understood within FAO itself now that the RCs have become GBs. Survey respondents also considered that the ROs provided effective support to the RCs. However there was less satisfaction regarding the timeliness of documentation.

147. The reports of the 2014 RC meetings adequately record the general lines of discussion and conclusions but they of necessity only provide a fraction of the substance expressed, which is often rich with national experience. There is a sense that the reports might benefit from a more substantial drafting process to ensure that the richness of the discussion is adequately captured. The format could also be substantially improved by listing the issues for action by Council and Conference on the front pages of the report, rather than only referring to paragraph numbers.

11.2.2 Global Governance and Internal Governance

148. All the agendas of the RCs follow a similar format that makes a clear distinction between the two functions of regional and global policy matters on the one hand, and internal governance, i.e. programme and budget matters, on the other.

149. The 2014 RCs discussed over 20 different issues concerning **regional and global policy matters** ranging from broad regional overviews of the state of food and agriculture to specific themes, such as “Youth in Agriculture” (ARC), “Repositioning Family Farming” (LARC), “Food Loss and Waste” (ERC), “Restoration and Grasslands and Forests for Climate Change Mitigation” (APRC) and “Regional Water Scarcity Initiative” (NERC). There was no common theme across regions and therefore no possibility for cross-regional synthesis for presentation to Conference as a contribution to the global policy stream discussed in Section 2. When the global policy segments of the reports are presented in Commission I at Conference there are few on-target interventions regarding policy matters, as is shown by the Verbatim records. For the most part, Members refer to programme issues rather than policy. In all cases the Conference has accepted and endorsed these reports without making any provision to carry the discourse further, either within FAO or more widely in global fora.

150. With respect to **internal governance**, the documentation in each 2014 RC regarding oversight, entitled “Follow-up to the 2012 RC, achievements and lessons learned,” was very brief in all cases and differed as to the scope of information provided, from very specific results based reporting in the case of Africa, to more general narratives about successes within the region, to text confined to the work of the RO only. Financial information was limited to a copy of the 2012/13 budget disaggregated by region and strategic objectives. The only exception was the APRC report, which also contained expenditure data for the FAO field programme in the region. Allocations to specific programmes or expenditure by activity area were not provided. As can be expected with such brief documentation, the discussion during the sessions was also extremely short and limited to general statements.

151. With the planned introduction of a corporate results monitoring tool, reports to all of the RCs on programme implementation should in future be able to provide the regional picture of FAO’s work for the consideration of the RC, based on outputs, indicators and targets. In addition to the overall picture, a more detailed presentation on the regional programme might also be provided. This more specific subset of the FAO programme should also contain financial information for on-going programmes, if the RC is expected to make realistic recommendations.

152. Priority setting for the coming biennium is intended to be one of the key elements of RC discussion to guide FAO's work in the region. Despite its prominence in the agenda, however, the documentation and the outcome of the discussion tends to be quite general, and in many cases the report back on priorities decided by the RCs are primarily a re-statement of the Organization's Strategic Objectives rather than providing more specific regional dimensions. The RCs could be requested to turn their attention to more specific issues within the SF in order to derive more pointed and richer conclusions that could provide greater direction to FAO's work within the region. A firm, realistic resource window should also be provided to the RC, to avoid a 'shopping list' approach to this more specific priority-setting exercise.

153. Regional Initiatives (RIs) were proposed to the RCs in 2014 as a way to implement the Reviewed SF and were approved by each RC as presented in the documentation. These RIs do represent a concrete step forward in decision-making by the Members on FAO activities at the regional level, although no resource framework was provided at the time of their approval which makes it difficult to ascertain their real scope of work.

154. The discussion of substantive programme matters during the RCs is strongly influenced by the fact that the sessions continue to be dominated by Members' representatives who are affiliated with Ministries of Agriculture without broader representation of forestry, fisheries, or livestock. Attempts to diversify RC representation and agendas have not been successful. The reports of the Regional Technical Commissions in fisheries and forests generally appear as information documents. An agenda analysis of the 2014 sessions indicates that only the iNARC had adequate representation in their meeting to review all areas of FAOs work. LARC was the only RC with a presentation by the Chair of a Regional Technical Commission but there was no discussion following the presentation.

155. This longstanding problem of representation is more acute now that RCs are Governing Bodies with the specific responsibility to provide regional priorities for the Organization's work. In light of the practical difficulty of increasing the number of Member representatives at the meetings, LARC and APRC have taken the pragmatic decision to consider the priorities expressed by the regional technical committees in fisheries and forestry as those of the region and included them as such in their report and FAO regional work-plan.⁴⁰ All RCs could consider this approach. As with the priorities decided within the RC itself, these must also be set within a firm, realistic financial window.

156. A number of RC Members have raised the issue of whether the RC could play a more proactive role in partnership development within the region, particularly with regard to resource mobilization. Where there are good prospects for greater collaboration among financing partners within the region it could be of benefit to both Members and to FAO to include this in the agenda. Showcasing on-going FAO partnerships with international financial institutions or of Global Environment Fund resources, for example, would raise awareness of the potential of such mechanisms.

⁴⁰ LARC/14/REP; APRC/10/REP, paragraphs 85-91; APRC/12/REP, paragraph 35.

11.3 Conclusions and recommendations

157. In the above discussion, the IR Team has made several proposals to enhance the work of the RCs, including: the possible need for further procedures to clarify RC chairs' responsibilities vis-à-vis the RC membership and the Secretariat; sessions that allow for greater exchange of views among delegates drawing on the experience of 2014 RCs; and integrating the priorities identified by regional technical commissions on forests and fisheries as an integral part of RC reports to Council.

158. Overall, however, the IR Team notes that although the RCs have grown in their governance responsibilities since 2010, they are not yet fully playing the role of a governing body in either Global or Internal Governance. In the absence of agreement regarding the priority areas in which FAO wants to contribute to global policy dialogue and regulation, as discussed in Section 2, the RC discussions of global policy matters have no impact beyond the meetings themselves, where they are in any case treated primarily as 'for information only' agenda items. At present, the RCs are not fulfilling their function with regard to Global Governance as envisaged in the IPA.

159. With regard to Internal Governance, the RCs' work on **priority setting** should become more specific now that the Reviewed SF and its results framework are in place and move away from the very general discussions about priorities. The approval of Regional Initiatives is a good step in this direction. In future, it should be possible to deepen RC involvement in defining regional initiatives by using the Reviewed SF to focus on the FAO outcomes and outputs that are seen to be of particular relevance to the region.

Recommendation 12: On priority-setting by the RCs

Priority setting at the regional level should focus on the Organizational Outcome level, in order to provide sufficient guidance for the Organization's work in the coming biennium.
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160. With regard to **programme oversight**, there is room to improve the information that the RCs have for this work. The new results framework and the planned results monitoring tool should make centrally-generated, more detailed information available for the use of the RCs with relatively little effort by the RO. The regional programme implemented by the ROs, including the Regional Initiatives, should form a more specific area of review by the RC.

Recommendation 13: On results-monitoring tool

The RCs should have results-based information at their disposal to be able to assess past programme implementation and achievement. More detailed progress on regional activities implemented under the RO's responsibility, including on the Regional Initiatives, should also be available for the RCs' review, as should include financial information.
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161. The IR Team believes that making more specific, results-based information available to the RCs would be an important "reality test" of the Reviewed SF itself and the extent to which it reflects a virtuous circle between priorities as seen from the regional perspective and the priorities of the Organization as a whole. If, however, it is deemed impractical or impossible to introduce the changes envisaged in the above two recommendations on priority-setting and programme oversight into the work of the RCs, then, after the 2016 round of meetings, members may wish to reassess the decision to include

the RCs in the internal governance stream. In any case, the RCs would continue however to make an important contribution to the global governance stream as set out above.

12 Multi-Year Plans of Work

12.1 Background

162. The IEE recommended that the GBs should establish a medium-term performance contract for what they intended to deliver, including a set of priorities for governance, an indicative timetable and possibly efficiency targets.⁴¹ The Coc-IEE subsequently described the proposed document as a “*forward work programme for all the governing bodies, perhaps on a rolling basis and that it should be possible to introduce a monitoring mechanism on progress which also included some indicators of efficiency.*”⁴² The document became known as the Multi-Year Plan of Work (MYPOW), which the IPA specified should be prepared for each Governing Body and reported upon periodically. The IR Team was specifically requested to assess the value of this tool as part of its overall assessment of IPA Actions.

12.2 Main Findings

163. MYPOWs are now a standing agenda item in each GB except Conference. They are formulated for a four-year period but can be revised at any time by the concerned GB. Council reviews progress reports on all MYPOWs every two years. While the IPA provided very little guidance on content or format, each MYPOW contains some or all of the following: an articulation of the scope of the work of the GB, beginning with a short description of responsibilities followed by generic results, indicators, outputs and activities; a section to document the GBs’ performance, including the quality of their work, work processes, and partnerships with other GBs and other entities; and a rolling agenda which provides a guide to the work of the GB over the MYPOW period, specifying the items that will be discussed in session.

164. Many Members are ambivalent about the utility of MYPOWs as are some of the Secretariat staff who prepare the drafts, expressing concerns about the lack of specificity in the results regarding the substance of the work, and/or noting that they do not necessarily add information beyond what is already available elsewhere, in the Basic Texts, agendas or reports of the sessions. Furthermore, the use of the results approach in describing the GBs’ work has increased the complexity of the document, without adding greatly to its meaning, given the very general nature of the way these results are described. This is perhaps due to the fact that the GB programme of work is already set, and that they carry on their work on the basis of scheduled documentation prepared by the Secretariat. While there are some examples of specific issues that are included in MYPOWs, they are very few.

165. On the other hand, the section on working methods and the rolling agendas are considered by a few to be quite valuable. The section on working methods contains the qualitative goals of the GB to support continuous movement toward more efficient and effective governance. In fact, the CCLM, which was initially reluctant to formulate a

⁴¹ IEE, para 273.

⁴² Co-Chairs’ Aide Memoire of Fifth Meeting of Coc-IEE WG II, 11 March 2008, point 5).

MYPOW as it has no standing or recurrent issues on its agenda per se, has now done so, specifically to document its working methods and practices, and to commit to review them annually. The rolling agendas are particularly useful for those GBs that meet often and have numerous responsibilities, i.e. Council, PC, and the FC.

166. The MYPOW as a performance assessment tool has been particularly problematic for the RCs and TCs that meet every two years with a large number of participants. As with all MYPOWs, the Results sections in the TC and RC MYPOWs are very general. Given the large and formal nature of many of these meetings, the section on working methods is not germane to most of the participants, except for those directly involved in the conduct of the meetings and report preparation. The IR Team found that it seems to have little meaning for the majority of the participants and is usually presented and approved with no discussion. Indeed, discussions in plenary revealed that many participants are under the impression that the MYPOW is actually intended to describe the results of FAO's work over the previous biennium, rather than that of the GB itself. Some useful suggestions were made by Members during the recent COFI session with regard to tracking inter-sessional activities. However, agenda tracking within the MYPOW is irrelevant for the RCs and TCs, as each session contains the same agenda items.

167. Overall, experience so far with the MYPOW indicates that it works best in those GBs that meet often, are smaller and have the relative informality and trust among members to be able to make a candid assessment of their work, both in terms of its progress in completing its substantive work effectively, and in achieving those process indicators relating to how their sessions are conducted.

12.3 Conclusions and recommendations

168. MYPOWs for Council, PC and FC are fully operational and should continue to be prepared and monitored. The Objectives, Methods of Work and Rolling Agenda items should be maintained, while the current Results section should be abolished. The MYPOW should continue to be reviewed within the GB, and a report submitted to Council biennially.

169. The IR Team's observations and recommendations regarding Council, the PC, FC and CCLM drew attention to the benefit of identifying strategic and cross-cutting specific issues that are critical to the Organization's work but often transcend any given agenda item and tracking these across sessions. The IR Team recommends that the MYPOW for these GBs include a section entitled 'Outstanding and strategic issues to be tracked over time' as a means of recording the selected issues and when they will be discussed by the GB as a whole. While the rolling agenda item is not relevant for the CCLM, it should consider whether to incorporate the new section on outstanding and strategic issues.

170. RC and TC MYPOWs should be discontinued and session reports should serve as the reference for agreed actions. A simple statement of Working Methods should be developed, and presented to the GB for review and approval. The Chair and Secretariat should then ensure that the sessions adhere to them and propose changes as deemed necessary. In the event that RC and TC Bureaux become active in the inter-sessional period, they may develop their own, specific, programmes of work, or if they wish they can use one or more elements of the MYPOW format. It is not productive, however, to continue to spend time and resources on a tool that is not useful in its present form in the large GBs.

Recommendation 14: On MYPOWs format

For the Council, PC, FC and CCLM, modify the existing format to delete the Results section, and to insert a section on ‘Outstanding and strategic issues to be tracked over time’.

Recommendation 15: On MYPOWs for RCs and TCs

For TCs and RCs, the MYPOW should be discontinued, unless the GB itself wishes to continue to prepare and report on it to Council.

13 Ministerial meetings

13.1 Background

171. Ministerial meetings have been part of FAO’s mechanisms to engage with its Members at the political level on various occasions. They are systematically held at RCs and the biennial Meeting of FAO South West Pacific Ministers for Agriculture also takes place on a regular basis. In addition, Ministerial Meetings have been held in conjunction with TCs on occasion, for example, the Ministerial Meeting on Forestry held on the last day of the 16th session of COFO in 2005, as a follow-up to a request by Conference in 2003. They are also held on specific topics, e.g. the Ministerial Conference on water for agriculture held in 2008 in Libya.

172. The IEE considered ministerial meetings to be useful events and recommended strengthening their political role by calling them as required to debate and endorse the global policy issues emerging from TCs prior to Conference’s own endorsement. It also recommended that Council be given the authority to call ministerial meetings on subjects of global importance. Accordingly the IPA provided for changes in the Basic Text, giving both Conference and Council to call ministerial meetings to discuss relevant policy issues.

13.2 Main Findings

173. Since the IPA actions, all RCs have included a ministerial-level meeting, as discussed in Section 11. A number of other ministerial meetings have been held: the Emergency Ministerial-Level Meeting on the Horn of Africa in July 2011 to draw attention to the humanitarian crisis underway; the Ministerial Meeting on Food Price Volatility in October 2012 and the follow-up Second Ministerial Meeting on International Food Prices in October 2013. All these events were called by the FAO DG.

174. Neither Conference nor Council has yet taken the initiative to call a ministerial meeting. Nevertheless, the ministerial meeting at the upcoming ICN2 in November 2014 could be considered an initiative of the FAO GBs as Council has been fully involved in its preparation with the support of the ICC.

175. The usefulness of ministerial meetings has been questioned in the IR Team’s interviews. The direct line of communication between TCs and Conference on global policy and regulatory matters may obviate the need for ministerial meetings linked to TC sessions, although the need could still arise at some stage.

176. However, if the suggestion put forward in the section on Technical Committees for a ‘standard’ technical focus in the plenary complemented by the endorsement at the political level of specific global policy and regulatory frameworks will be accepted, ministerial meetings would resume their role in the chain of approval. Equally, themes like livestock, which do not have a dedicated Governing Body, will require specialized ministers’ meetings to discuss and endorse global policy issues on those specific subjects.

13.3 Conclusions and recommendations

177. The governance reform process and other factors may have limited the scope for ministerial meetings although the need may arise on future occasions, particularly in conjunction with the work of the TCs. The experience of Member engagement in the ICN2 process may offer insights into ways in which Members can organize and coordinate their inputs into other important policy-making processes.

14 Statutory bodies

14.1 Background

178. The IEE devoted limited attention to the statutory bodies of FAO, including those established under Article VI and XIV of the FAO constitution. They were discussed mostly as regards their administrative and financial relationship with FAO. It recommended that the bodies’ took the responsibility for their own funding, and that a review be carried out to identify ways in which a more enabling environment would benefit all parties. In addition, it noted there was a gap in their reporting to Conference on global governance matters.

179. The wide diversity among Article XIV Bodies made it difficult for both the IEE and the IPA to offer them extensive advice and guidance. By 2014 there were 14 entities established the Article XIV of FAO Constitution. Of these five were related to fisheries and aquaculture; three to the control of desert locusts; two to animal production and health; two to plant protection; one to cultivated trees; and one to genetic resources. In 2013, the members of the International Rice Commission suspended their activities due to the repeated lack of quorum largely as a result of the evolution of work on rice in other fora.

180. IPA Action 2.68 provided for Article XIV Bodies to raise issues to Council and Conference through the relevant TC and IPA Action 2.69 called for a review of how those bodies to that wished to do so could exercise financial and administrative authority and mobilise additional funding from their members, while remaining within the FAO framework and maintaining a reporting relationship with it.

181. The review of Article XIV Bodies called for by the IPA was launched in 2009 under the responsibility of the FAO Legal Office. It included consultation with the Secretaries of the Article XIV Bodies in early 2012, a questionnaire to FAO members and discussions at the CCLM and FC. The final report was presented to the FC in March 2013. It identified a number of administrative and financial areas in which further delegation of authority could be granted to the Bodies if certain criteria were met, such as their Secretariats’ staff capacity and on having oversight mechanisms in place. Areas for possible delegation included staff selection procedures, channels of communication with Members, relations with donors, and

organization of meetings, among other things. The FC concurred with the cautious approach proposed and asked for a follow-up report in the future.

14.2 Main Findings

182. The IR Team focused on whether progress had been made in granting Article XIV Bodies access to Council and Conference as well as greater administrative autonomy. Responses to the IR Team's questionnaire to the Secretaries of Article XIV Bodies revealed dissatisfaction with the current delegation of authority.⁴³ The majority of respondents assessed as insufficient the authority to decide about attendance in external meetings, duty travel of Secretariat staff, concluding arrangements with other organizations, and rules and procedures for translation. About half the respondents felt there was sufficient authority over financial management, resource mobilization and communication with Members; the rest felt that this authority was insufficient. The majority of respondents considered that the rates of FAO Project Support Costs were not acceptable. On the other hand, most of the respondents considered they had sufficient authority in the selection and appointment of Non Staff Human Resources and on administrative matters.

183. The Secretaries did not appear to have enough information on issues such as separate audits, appointment of professional staff and participation of NGOs in Article XIV Bodies meetings. With respect to NGO participation, it was felt that this should be left up to each Article XIV body to decide given their diversity. The questionnaire revealed that Article XIV Bodies have not brought any issue to the attention of FAO Council and Conference, such as presenting constitutive agreements for endorsement and information about on-going reforms.⁴⁴ In fact, some Article XIV bodies do report to the Regional Conferences in their capacity as Regional Technical Committees, however some Secretaries were not even aware that this was a possibility even though they had been in the post for several years.

184. The questionnaire responses and interviews did not identify the causes for the limited delegation of authority despite the decision by the FAO Governing Bodies to provide greater autonomy when the agreed criteria were met. Bodies that have no access to extra-budgetary resources are necessarily bound by the rules of FAO's Regular Programme and its biennial planning cycle; however many of the Statutory Bodies also have access to extra-budgetary resources where there is greater flexibility. What did emerge was something of a lose-lose situation for the Article XIV Bodies: on the one hand their Secretariats do not enjoy any greater freedom by being an Article XIV Body while on the other they do not benefit from the advantages of being part of FAO, such as the possibility of being assigned Junior Professional Officers. This is despite the fact that the advantage to FAO of hosting these Bodies was repeatedly highlighted in interviews with the FAO management.

14.3 Conclusions and proposals

185. The FAO Secretariat's implementation of IPA Actions 2.68 and 2.69 has to date been only a first, insufficient step in meeting the greater flexibility envisaged by the IEE. There has been little access by the Article XIV Bodies to the Governing Bodies and limited

⁴³ See Annex 3 for the detailed methodology.

⁴⁴ Only the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (IT-PGRFA) held a side event at the 149th session of the Council in June 2014.

progress has been made in terms of granting them more autonomy of operation and decision-making on administrative and financial issues. In both cases, this may be due to insufficient communication between the Secretaries and the ADGs concerned.

186. Some corporate policies, such as those relating to project support costs and translation are unlikely to be changed although there is scope for some harmonization.⁴⁵ However, delegation of authority on management of financial resources, travel and attendance in external meetings should be granted by the senior managers to whom the Secretaries report, based on the needs and characteristics of each Body. The fact that these issues are pending suggests that dialogue and exchange on these matters is quite limited.

187. The IR Team believes that despite the diversity of the Article XIV Bodies flexibility can be applied regarding the issues correctly identified by the Legal Office Review with no increase of reputational or substantial risk to the Organization. The upcoming evaluation of the International Plant Protection Convention Secretariat, whose report is expected for early 2015, should help to clarify some of these issues in the case of one of the Article XIV Bodies.

188. In addition, the IR Team believes that Conventions and Agreements in the areas contributing to FAO's Goals and Strategic Objectives need an environment in which they can thrive and that this would in turn enhance the Organization's work at the global level.

15 Evaluation

15.1 Background

189. IPA Actions 2.77 – 2.9 addressed the evaluation function's institutional location, budget, staffing, and quality assurance, and provided for a comprehensive evaluation policy incorporated in a Charter embedded in the Basic Texts. The policy included inter alia, a rolling evaluation plan, institutionalized follow-up processes, an advisory role to management on results-based management, and an internal Evaluation Committee to interact with the PC as appropriate. The IPA also mandated a peer review every two years and an independent evaluation of the evaluation function every six years. The IPA did not take up IEE Recommendation 7.10 that the Evaluation Office becomes fully independent reporting to Council through the PC and with a budget approved by the GBs, despite the fact that the IEE had found that an "overwhelming majority" of Members as well as "many staff and external partners" were in favour of such a move.

15.2 Main Findings

190. All IPA actions on evaluation have been complied with, although there are still some areas where further strengthening and clarity are needed as discussed below.

191. The IPA formalized the Evaluation Office's existing dual reporting line by establishing it as "a separate and operationally independent office" located inside the Secretariat and reporting to the DG as well as to the Council through the PC. The budget is

⁴⁵ A rapid analysis of the Trust Funds supporting Article XIV Bodies showed that programme support costs varied from zero to 13%, with 6% being the average.

now 0.8% rather than 1%, as set in the IPA, but this seems to be working well. The process followed in the appointment of the present OED Director was in line with the IPA actions, something that the GBs helped to ensure, and the selection panel included representatives of the Secretariat and of Member countries. Member participation in the selection process was felt to be positive overall although there was criticism of the prolonged delays.

192. The IR Team found that the dual reporting line has contributed to some tensions within the Secretariat regarding authorities over such issues as staff and consultant recruitment, administration, and travel plans, raising the question of OED's ability to independently manage its budget once it has been approved. There is some resentment that the level of the OED budget is protected at a time of severe cuts across the organization. There is an ongoing discussion about the respective roles of audit and evaluation, including some views that the latter should be folded into the former. Management and OED make compelling arguments on both sides of such issues. No one suggested alternatives to the dual reporting line among the GBs or the Secretariat. Indeed, as was pointed out, management has to be a partner if they are going to take evaluation recommendations on board. In addition, it is clear that the arrangement has worked well enough for OED to produce quality work over time as assessed by the independent peer review and as seen in the high level of Member satisfaction.

193. The IPA called for an institutionalized OED advisory role to management on results-based management, programming and budgeting. There is not yet such a role, but this is likely to evolve as the Organization strengthens its results-based management reporting systems and as OED pursues plans to work with field offices on results. Management has requested specific information from OED as the need arises, for example, a recent request for findings from previous evaluations about the technical quality of FAO's work. The trend is moving to more meta-evaluations, which it is believed will better serve the PC and other GBs as well as some management needs by providing more general perspectives on policy and operational practices as a basis for decision making. This may partly help to address management concerns about the inability to handle the quantity of recommendations generated by evaluations.

194. A peer review was conducted in 2012 that gave high marks to the evaluation function and was welcomed by the GBs. However, the Management Response was critical, in a way that perhaps reflects some of the frustrations regarding the dual reporting line. One of the peer review recommendations was for the PC to play a role in the performance evaluation of the OED director. IR Team interviews with the Secretariat as well as the GBs revealed a sense that the GBs would not have sufficient information to do so. The first Independent Evaluation of the Evaluation Function is planned for 2015-16.

195. The Charter for the FAO Office of Evaluation has been incorporated into the Basic Texts. OED has functioned on the basis of a rolling plan for 18-24 months, that is presented to the GBs. Management discusses the OED plan of work through the Evaluation Committee (Internal). The PC reviews the work plan and identifies GB priorities. There was mixed feedback about the engagement of management in and the value-added of the Evaluation Committee (Internal), with some expressing great interest in the work and others not. Individual evaluation managers have started attending Evaluation Committee meetings to explain the rationale behind the findings. The Internal Evaluation Committee does not yet seem to have interacted with the PC, although this was envisaged by the IPA.

196. In 2011, the PC introduced a new requirement in the evaluation process, requesting a validation of some follow-up reports to Management Responses. This indicates to the IR Team that the GBs feel the need for an independent assessment's reassurance that the follow-up reports were not glossing over difficulties encountered or avoiding issues raised. Indeed Survey respondents were doubtful about the PC's ability to follow up on the implementation of evaluation recommendations, through the present process of management responses and subsequent follow-up reports. This points to an accountability issue between the PC and management that needs to be addressed systematically. In this regard, GB respondents say that they have found the validation reports useful.

197. There is a high degree of GB satisfaction with evaluation: a large majority of Survey respondents found that evaluation contributed to their governance and oversight functions. The IR Team found, however, that the extent of the contribution evaluations make to the GB strategy and priority-setting functions was unclear. In interviews, Members said that on the whole they were reviewing the right number of evaluations, and that the ability to examine both the evaluation and the management response worked well. There are examples of the PC taking the initiative to request specific evaluations, for example the evaluation of decentralized offices which the GBs valued and which they believe has enhanced their capacity for oversight.

198. During the IR Team's work, a new OED director was appointed. In a presentation of preliminary directions to the PC, the new director spoke of enhancing country level and field office evaluation capacity, increasing national ownership of evaluations, and fully engaging with management and other stakeholders to make evaluations useful, including designating an OED focal point for each SO. The IR Team understands that future directions for OED may involve establishing a clear distinction between the evaluations that OED leads and authors and those that independent consultants are asked to lead and author with OED responsible for quality assurance. The IR Team notes that this is done in other organizations, but also notes the risk for all organizations that staff naturally develop views on issues which could influence their perceptions. Greater focus will be placed on country programme evaluations and the number of thematic evaluations will be reduced. The former will primarily serve management needs and be provided to the PC for information. The move to meta-evaluations is continuing, with the aim of analysing data on results in a way that enables GB enable decision-making on strategic objectives. This may mean that fewer evaluations will go to the PC than at present.

15.3 Conclusions and recommendations

199. It is beyond the scope of the IR Team to examine the evaluation function in detail, which will doubtless be done by the planned Independent Evaluation of the Evaluation function in 2015-2016. The Independent Evaluation will be very timely given the potentially significant changes in the way OED goes about fulfilling its mandate. In the experience of the IR Team these are the issues that would be important to consider in the evaluation's terms of reference to have a well-functioning OED able to provide maximum support to the PC in its oversight function.

200. The PC Members may wish to consider including some elements in the terms of reference of the Independent Evaluation of the Evaluation Function's, *inter alia*: ways to enhance the effectiveness of the dual reporting line; the independence of OED to manage its budget once it has been approved and any effects this has on its ability to perform; the

implications of OED-led and authored reports for the independence of evaluation findings; how useful and implementable OED recommendations to management have been; the effectiveness of the “evaluation/management response/follow-up report/validation” process in supporting GB guidance and oversight; the PC’s use of evaluation findings in its strategic guidance, priority setting and oversight of FAO.

201. The IR Team believes that there is no alternative to the dual reporting line and that even in the best possible conditions this will still create some tension that will need continuous management over time. Members may wish to consider regular interaction between the Internal Evaluation Committee and the PC, as envisaged by the IPA. This could help strengthen the contribution of evaluations to both management and GB and reduce any tensions in the dual reporting line. In addition, evaluations reviewed by the PC should be anchored to and focus on the Organizational Outcome level of the Reviewed SF.

Recommendation 16: On the scope of thematic evaluations

The scope of thematic evaluations should focus on the Organizational Outcome level of the Reviewed SF, either through the compilation of ‘meta’ data, or through specific evaluations designed for this purpose.

16 Audit

16.1 Background

202. The IPA included Audit and Evaluation within the Governance section, given their contributions to the oversight role of the Governing Bodies. Specifically, the IPA provided that the work of the Inspector-General’s office should be extended to cover all major organizational risk areas; that the Audit Committee should be appointed by the DG, have a fully external member, and should report annually to Council, through the FC. In addition provision was made for the External Auditor to assume responsibility for audit of the Office of the Director-General.

16.2 Main Findings

203. The actions envisaged have been broadly implemented and the procedures for the selection of members of the Audit Committee and for its reporting to the FC are well established.

204. The FC receives two reports on the audit function each year: an annual report from the Inspector General, which summarizes their work in the past year, including a summary of their findings by category of audit observations; and the Audit Committee’s annual report on the work of the Inspector General’s Office as well as on any specific issues as requested. Their report, tabled in May 2014, discussed internal control, risk management and governance.

205. Satisfaction with the information provided through the Audit function is high, with virtually all of the Survey respondents in agreement with the statement that ‘Audit contributes to the governance and oversight functions of the Governing Bodies’.

206. The IR Team observed the FC session in May 2014 during which the above-noted reports were discussed. Engagement on the part of the FC was good, and the discussion substantive. The reports of the FC to Council provide concrete recommendations for Council's consideration. In 2011 the Office of the Inspector General managed the preparation of what came to be known as Marnet Report, an assessment of the IPA process from a risk perspective. The report was discussed at the Joint Meeting and was highly appreciated by Members.

207. The External Auditor does not seem to undertake a specific audit of the Office of the Director General, although it is included in its overall analysis of FAO accounts. The Office of the Inspector General audits it on a quarterly basis.

16.3 Conclusions

208. The IPA actions on audit have been fulfilled and the work of the Office of the Inspector General and the Audit Committee are well appreciated by the FC and effectively contribute to the oversight role of the GBs.

209. The IR Team noted that some of the work of the Office of the Inspector General such as the performance assessment of country offices, could be of potential interest to the PC. This includes, for example, assessment of compliance with the Country Programming Frameworks, gender audit and other programme-related criteria. The IR Team considers that the overall governance function would benefit from more sharing and discussion of specific findings from Audit and Evaluation between the PC and FC, either through discussion in the Joint Meeting or by separate review, as recommended in Section 6.

17 DG-related actions

17.1 Background

210. IPA Actions in relation to the Organization's DG were inspired by the IEE and aimed at enhancing the transparency of the selection process to enable a better-informed decision by Members at election time. The actions included the modality and timing of vacancy announcements, the presentation of nominations, and interaction between the candidates and the Members. In addition, the IPA called on Conference to consider approving desirable qualifications for the post of DG and to set the term of his/her appointment at four years, with possibility of renewal for one further four-year term. Lastly, the IPA called for enhanced communication between the DG and the Members on the occasion of the Council and the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees on the Strategic Framework, the Medium Term Plan and priority goals of the Organization.

17.2 Main Findings

211. Conference modified the Basic Texts of the Organization in 2009. Accordingly, in 2011 the six candidates to the post of DG addressed the Council in April and the Conference in June. The duration of the mandate has been changed as recommended by the IPA while the initial 12-month period for submitting nominations for candidates was reduced to three in 2013 after discussion in the CCLM and Council.

212. The DG has addressed the Council and Joint Meetings regularly, with the exception of 2013.⁴⁶ The DG has also systematically addressed all the Ministerial Meetings at the Regional Conferences. In addition to these fora, the DG has a tradition of quarterly informal meetings with the Permanent Representatives on specific topics. These meetings are well appreciated and dialogue and exchange takes place, although they tend to be rather formal events given their size.

213. The only outstanding action related to the DG concerns the approval of desirable qualifications for the post of Director-General. The Members had lengthy and controversial debates in the GBs on the subject in 2012 and 2013. At its 146th session in April 2013 Council decided that it could not reach a conclusion.

214. The IR Team's interviews revealed that most interlocutors defined the issue as 'political' or saw it as a stalemate between the G77 and OECD members. Some even described as a meaningless action proposed by the IPA. Strong arguments were raised by both sides.

215. Other specialized agencies have agreed on desirable qualifications for their DGs. The Executive Board of WHO adopted resolution EB97.R10 that candidates should have *inter alia* a strong technical and public health background; competency in organizational management; and proven public health leadership. At its 180th session in 2008, the Executive Board of UNESCO identified the following qualities for its DG, including, *inter alia*, leadership and proven administrative and management skills; a visionary and active approach to the role of UNESCO in the community of nations; strong communication skills so as to develop effective internal and external communication strategies, vision and objectives for the Organization; and empathy and sensitivity to civil society as an important UNESCO constituency (180 EX/28).

17.3 Conclusions and recommendations

216. All IPA actions relating to the DG have been implemented, with minor adjustments, and only the establishment of "desirable qualifications" for the post remains unaccomplished.

217. Noting the appreciation of Members regarding their interactions with the DG, the IR Team believes there is scope for more opportunities for informal interaction between the DG and Members than those mentioned in the IPA. This can be achieved by modifying the format of the informal meetings and of the Joint Meeting.

218. As for the outstanding action regarding the qualifications of the DG, the IR Team has listened carefully to the arguments for and against, noting that the majority were not in favour of pursuing this action. It further notes that under the current rules of nomination information about candidates is made available and that candidates must be presented to both Council and Conference before election. The IR Team does not believe that this issue will be resolved in the foreseeable future.

⁴⁶ In Section 8, the IR Team suggested that the advantage be taken of the Joint Meeting for a more informal exchange with the DG.

Recommendation 17: On the qualification of FAO Director-General

The outstanding IPA action regarding desirable qualifications for DG candidates should be closed.

18 The Cost of FAO Governing Bodies

18.1 Background

219. The IEE devoted substantial time and energy to cost analysis. In relation to Governance, it reported on the share of the Net Appropriation dedicated to the Conference and Council Affairs Division, which had decreased from 2.7% in 1994-95 to 1.9% in 2006/07. It believed that such a percentage “...clearly does not reflect the importance of the Governing Bodies’ role, not just in oversight of the Secretariat but in performing the global governance function for food and agriculture.”⁴⁷

220. The IPA did not raise the issue of cost-efficiency in its Governance chapter, but it has been included in this Review, including both overall costs of governance, as well as information on the direct cost of revising the Basic Texts as part of the IPA. The IR Team focused on the costs of all Divisions and Regional Offices directly related to servicing the GBs and sought to capture the ‘hidden’ costs represented by the time of secretaries and technical staff contributing to the overall effort of governance.

18.2 Main Findings

221. The main items of expenditures that FAO incurs servicing the GBs are:

- Translation of documents for the GBs;⁴⁸
- Interpretation during the GB sessions;
- Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA), emoluments and travel of the ICC;
- Travel and DSA for representatives of Members appointed to the GBs;
- Time of Secretaries of GBs and of other staff for the organization and attendance of GB meetings;
- Staff time for the preparation of documents specifically for the GBs;⁴⁹
- Supporting services for GB sessions (messengers, IT services, etc.)

222. Although the items of expenditure did not change over time, it did not prove feasible to make a direct comparison between 2006/07 and 2012/13. First of all, the Conference and Council Division moved across three different institutional locations, which made it impossible to trace its budget and expenditures over time. Secondly, the fact that no official time records were kept for GB secretaries and the rotation in these posts meant that the analysis had to rely on the memory of those available for interview.

⁴⁷ IEE report, paragraph 733

⁴⁸ The higher costs in translation and interpretation due to the inclusion of Russian as the sixth official language of FAO, following the admission of the Russian Federation as a member of FAO have been also funded by the Russian Federation itself through a dedicated Trust Fund.

⁴⁹ This does not include a number of documents that would have to be prepared independently from their presentation to the GBs, e.g.: Strategic Framework, MTP, BWP, PIR, evaluation reports, Audited accounts, etc.

223. It is worth noting that the IPA actions on Governance could only lead to an increase in the number of days that GBs meet, as there has been a net increase in the number of GBs since the IPA, as well as an increase in the number of sessions of Council, as recommended by the IPA. The number of side events has also increased. Costs are also expected to increase with increased inter-sessional work by the RCs and TCs.

224. The increase in the number of days, sessions and side events between 2006/07 and 2012/13 is shown in Box 3 below. The peak in 2008/09 for the CCLM and in 2010/11 for the PC and FC was directly or indirectly due to the IPA actions and it is unlikely it will be reached again. Data are available over a longer time span in Annex 4.

Box 3. Number of GB sessions and length in 2006/07 and 2012/13

Governing Body	2006/07			2008/09			2010/11			2012/13		
	N. days	N. sessions	N. side events	N. days	N. sessions	N. side events	N. days	N. sessions	N. side events	N. days	N. sessions	N. side events
<i>Conference</i>	8	1	4	10	2	2	8	1	9	8	1	18
<i>Council</i>	15	4	3	12	4	17	21	5	8	21	5	16
<i>Programme Committee</i>	20	4	0	18	4		27	7		22	4	
<i>Joint Meeting PC+FC</i>	4	4	0	4	4		5	5		5	5	
<i>Finance Committee</i>	21	4	0	19	6		21	6		16	4	
Total Conf+CI+PC+FC	68	17	7	63	20	19	82	24	17	72	19	34
<i>CCLM</i>	4	2		16	7		11	4		13	4	
<i>COAG</i>	4	1	1	4	1		4	1		5	1	5
<i>CCP</i>	3	1	4	3	1		3	1		3	1	4
<i>COFI</i>	5	1		5	1	16	5	1		5	1	
<i>COFO</i>	5	1	2	5	1		5	1		5	1	53
<i>APRC</i>					1		5	1		5	1	
<i>ARC</i>					1		5	1		5	1	
<i>ERC</i>					2		4	2		4	2	
<i>LARC</i>					1		5	1		5	1	
<i>NERC</i>					1		5	1		5	1	
Grand Total	89	24	14	96	37	35	134	38	17	127	33	96
<i>Finance Committee for WFP</i>	6	4		12	4		12	6		7	4	

Source: FAO GB website

225. With this background in mind, the analysis of current costs of FAO Governance was carried out on the basis of expenditures incurred during the 2012/13 biennium and a

projection based on available data as of July 2014, for the 2014/15 biennium.⁵⁰ The data shown in Box 4 below should be taken as indicative given the absence of accurate records.

Box 4. Cost of servicing FAO Governing Bodies in 2012/13 and projections for 2014/15

	2012/2013		Projection cost 2014/15	
	USD	%	USD	%
<i>Conference</i>	2,618,616	14.0%	2,618,616	14.1%
<i>Council</i>	3,292,883	17.7%	3,292,883	17.8%
<i>Independent Chair of the Council</i>	270,352	1.5%	334,118	1.8%
<i>Programme Committee and Joint Meeting</i>	2,584,233	13.9%	1,989,302	10.7%
<i>Finance Committee</i>	2,056,780	11.0%	2,056,780	11.1%
<i>CCLM</i>	772,991	4.1%	772,991	4.2%
<i>COFI</i>	817,275	4.4%	1,104,104	6.0%
<i>COFO</i>	744,330	4.0%	869,817	4.7%
<i>COAG</i>	752,846	4.0%	701,420	3.8%
<i>CCP</i>	782,785	4.2%	783,785	4.2%
<i>ARC</i>	848,790	4.6%	631,374	3.4%
<i>APRC</i>	387,142	2.1%	517,008	2.8%
<i>ERC</i>	794,723	4.3%	790,207	4.3%
<i>LARC</i>	631,910	3.4%	652,863	3.5%
<i>NERC</i>	691,497	3.7%	828,470	4.5%
<i>OSD</i>	596,434	3.2%	596,434	3.2%
Grand total	18,643,588	100%	18,540,171	100%
% of biennial Net Appropriation		1.85%		1.67%

Source: PIRES; CPA; questionnaire to Secretaries of Governing Bodies; further analysis by OED.

226. The data show that the cost of governance in FAO continues to represent a low share of the Regular Programme budget: the total cost in 2012/13 represented 1.85% of the corporate Net Appropriation for the biennium, and in 2014/15 it will represent less than 1.7%. This is well below the share that the IEE considered did not represent the importance of FAO governance. If the Organization's extra-budgetary resources were to be included, the cost of governance would be below 1% of total available resources.

227. More detailed analysis showed that the various categories of cost varied by group of Governing Body. For example, translation and interpretation absorb more than 55% of the total cost of the Council Committees, but only 30-40% of the costs of TCs and RCs; staff time, including of Secretaries and ADGs, represents 55-60% of the total in the case of TCs and RCs, but only 13% of the cost of Council Committees.

228. Different approaches should be adopted in the effort to identify potential for further savings. It would greatly help this endeavour to harmonize budgeting and reporting as well as time-keeping of activities devoted to exclusively servicing of the GBs. To take just one example, the RC budget line varied from USD 161,000 to USD 612,000 and one Regional Office had no budget line for this major activity in 2012/13.

229. The cost of updating the Basic Texts comprised two main items of expenditure. The first was the higher number of CCLM sessions which entailed higher costs of translation,

⁵⁰ See Annex 3 for more information on the assumptions underpinning the cost analysis.

interpretation and travel of CLLM members. The second item of expenditure was the actual modification of the Basic Texts in all languages and its transformation into a user-friendly document on-line. This cost was paid out of the IPA extra-budgetary resources and amounted to USD 380,000. Other actions to improve the functioning of the GBs that were funded through the IPA extra-budgetary resources included the upgrade of the Permanent Representatives website, the introduction of automatic queuing of Member requests for the floor in Council and the automatic tally system for elections and other votes.

230. It should also be noted that the follow-up to some IPA measures will enhance savings in the medium term, for example reducing the length of Conference. A decision by the PC that only the Executive Summary of the evaluation reports would be translated into all the languages of the Organization entailed significant savings from late 2013 onward. For example, the cost of translation of evaluation reports discussed at the 115th PC session in May 2014 was reduced by 89%, approximately USD 86,000.⁵¹

231. Not all the IPA-introduced measures brought about major savings, however. A case in point is the length of GBs reports, which were repeatedly brought as an example of greater efficiency as they are said to have become shorter. The comparison of the number of words of reports of parallel sessions of the Conference, Council and Council Committees in 2006/07 and in 2012/13 only shows a 7% decrease in the number of words, excluding annexes.

232. An area where additional costs may be needed is the timely availability of reports for the GBs: only half of all the respondents expressed satisfaction with timeliness and a large minority expressed strong dissatisfaction in four out of eight GBs. This is clearly an area where the Organization needs to improve its performance, even if this may entail some additional cost.

18.3 Conclusions

233. In the absence of accurate data recorded over time it was not possible to carry out a “before and after the IPA” analysis of the cost of servicing FAO Governing Bodies. Nevertheless, the IR Team’s analysis shows that in 2012/13 and 2014/15, the approximate cost of governance in FAO corresponded to 1.75% of the Net Appropriation.

234. There is potential for additional savings in the medium-term, through enhanced focus and efficiency in servicing the Governing Bodies. This should be pursued where possible, although attention has also to be paid to maintaining, and in some cases improving, the quality and effectiveness of the services provided and of the resulting products. The most important gap was in the timeliness of the delivery of documents in the original version as well as in languages.

⁵¹ Based on charges for CPAM mandatory translations submitted in due time.

19 A synthesis of Conclusions and Recommendations

235. Looking back at IEE's statement six years ago that FAO's Governing Bodies were "*failing the organization*", the IR Team found that the GBs have made substantial progress in their reform. They have implemented almost all the Governance Actions contained in the IPA, which has made a significant difference in the enabling environment for governance within the Organization. Virtually everyone with whom the IR Team spoke believed that there has been a transformative change in governance, built on the sense of trust among the Members themselves, as well as trust between the Members and Senior Management.

236. Trust has been nurtured in specific ways, such as the work of the ICC to facilitate communication among the Members, increased interaction with the Director General and the availability of Senior Management during the GB sessions, as well as better, more complete documentation. This sense of trust has also enabled Council to delegate more responsibility to the PC, FC and CCLM Committees and, for the most part, to accept their findings and recommendations as its own. Conference, likewise, has limited its deliberations on the MTP/PWB to the budget, affirming Council's decision on its direction and content.

237. Although most of the IPA Actions have been implemented to very good effect the IR Team found that there is still some way to go for effective and efficient governance. The major issues are synthesized below together with the recommendations that we believe will be particularly effective in taking governance reform to the next level. The Team has also identified some operational "nuts and bolts" issues for Members' consideration, to further enhance the efficiency of the way the GBs work while also contributing to their effectiveness. The discussion begins with the three outstanding IPA actions, and then moves to the recommended approach to global as well as internal governance, and concludes with the operational suggestions.

The three outstanding IPA actions

238. Only three of the IPA actions are still outstanding: that Council should make a firm recommendation on the budget to Conference, that the size and composition of the Council should be reconsidered, and that qualifications for the post of DG should be formalized. The IR Team has carefully considered all aspects of the three outstanding IPA actions, and noted that Members have worked hard to address them over the past six years. It has concluded that Members see the recommendation of the level of the budget to Conference as a political issue given the divergence between those that favour zero-growth and those Members – as well as the Organization – that aspire to some growth. It notes that the question of the size and composition of Council is stalled, due in large part to many Members' keen desire to participate in the "executive" body of the organization as well as other Members' strong views in favour of a smaller Council. Finally it notes that there are strongly divergent Member views regarding whether or not to have qualifications for the post of DC.

239. The IR Team does not believe Members have the interest or will to achieve consensus on any of these items for the foreseeable future. As none of these are substantially affecting the ability of the Members to govern the Organization, they should be closed. Recommendations 4, 5, and 17 are made to this effect.

Recommendation 4 **On Council's role in recommending the budget level**

The outstanding IPA action regarding Council's recommendation of the budget level to Conference should be closed.

Recommendation 5 **On Council's size**

The outstanding IPA action regarding the size and composition of Council should be closed.

Recommendation 17 **On the qualification of FAO Director-General**

The outstanding IPA action regarding desirable qualifications for DG candidates should be closed.

Organization-Wide Contribution to Global Governance

240. The IR Team's main finding and recommendation relates to the need to implement IPA Action 2.1 in the way it envisaged FAO's contribution to global governance. While recognizing that considerable work is underway at FAO to contribute to global policy and regulatory matters, the IR Team found that the GBs do not yet systematically review the global situation to identify areas requiring priority initiative for greater policy coherence and, among those, select one or two per biennium to which FAO would make an organization-wide contribution.

241. In Section 2, the IR Team described the recommended flow of the global governance stream and briefly summarizes it here. It begins with the Strategic Objective Coordinators and Technical Departments reviewing major areas within FAO's mandate, including those being addressed in upcoming global conferences and dialogues and making a proposal to the PC. The PC and Council would subsequently decide which one or two priority areas to recommend to Conference for organization-wide work in the coming biennium. Conference would then request the RCs and TCs to consider the regional and technical dimensions of the priority area during their next sessions, alongside their other regional and technical work. The RCs and TCs would bring their findings and conclusions to the next Conference, where Commission I would produce a regionally nuanced, technically sound global policy statement, with proposed regulation for development as deemed appropriate. Commission I would also initiate the cycle for the next biennium by identifying the next global priority issue for RC and TC consideration.

242. The IR Team believes that if IPA Action 2.1 is implemented FAO will capture much of the ground lost to other global fora. Bringing the technical expertise and regional dimensions to bear on a global policy issue would make for a very powerful FAO position with considerable weight in the international sphere. This is why the IR Team urges Members to give Recommendation 1 their full attention.

Recommendation 1 **On the review of gaps in global policy**

Conference should request the FAO Secretariat to:

- i) systematically review the global situation to determine those issues requiring priority initiative for greater policy coherence and regulation, and
- ii) propose priority areas for global policy and regulation for development by FAO in order to support the GBs' work in priority setting to guide and strengthen the Organization's work in global governance.

Accountability at the Heart of Internal Governance

243. The other major findings and recommendations by the IR Team relate to internal governance, that is the guidance to and oversight by GBs of FAO's work. Oversight of the Organization's work is a long and multi-faceted process: five RCs are intended to provide oversight for the work in their region as well as guidance for priorities for future work; four TCs review work in their technical areas also with a view to informing priorities for future work. The PC has the most substantive role in programme matters at the central level, both in its review and assessment of programme documentation as well as in evaluation. The FC reviews all financial and administrative matters. All of these bodies transmit their views and recommendations to Council, which is the effective decision-point for the work of the Organization on all aspects of its internal governance work. In short, it is a large system of governance and it has grown larger with the IPA decision to include the RCs in the governance stream. The IR Team considered various options to 'lighten' this system, but found that a strong case can be made for every individual GB, with one caveat relating to the RCs. Instead, the Team has focused on ways to make the system more effective and efficient.

244. The IR Team further believes there is scope for all GBs to exercise more effective oversight and to hold the Organization accountable. The first issue that constrains their ability to do so is the lack of a results-based monitoring tool that would provide the GBs with the information to enable them to gauge how resources have contributed to results. Council in particular, as the central body for oversight, will want to ensure that the tools now being developed in the Secretariat generate the information that is fit for their purposes. It will need to be proactive in its dialogue with the Secretariat to ensure that GBs have the information that they need, and that it is developed in a timely manner and, if necessary, take the steps to marshal its own resources to supplement those of the Secretariat to make results-based information on programme implementation available. This is the substance of Recommendations 2 and 3.

Recommendation 2 On Council's access to independent advice

Council should agree in principle to commission work on selected issues independently from the Secretariat, on a case-by-case basis, and take the further steps necessary to organize this, including identifying the requisite resources.
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Recommendation 3 On Council's oversight function

Council should continue to push for the kind of results-based information that will enable it to give effective guidance and oversight to FAO's work, with the active support of the PC and FC. If there is continued dissatisfaction, it may consider drawing on independent expertise for assistance.

245. As regards the RCs and TCs, the IR Team notes that they are not only GBs for the purposes of oversight, but are also useful opportunities for FAO Members to discuss issues of relevance to their region or technical area and important fora for information exchange and dialogue. Given that they only meet once every two years, these two sets of GBs suffer in particular from the lack of results-based information together with the requisite financial information. The IR Team found that this substantive dialogue often overshadows the governance function, and that there is a need to sharpen both the TC and the RC focus on decision-making regarding the oversight of and guidance to the work of the Organization. It makes two recommendations in this regard to strengthen the guidance and oversight functions

of the RCs, Recommendation 12 on priority-setting and Recommendation 13 on results-monitoring.

Recommendation 12 On priority-setting by the RCs

Priority setting at the regional level should focus on the Organizational Outcome level, in order to provide sufficient guidance for the Organization's work in the coming biennium.

Recommendation 13 On results-monitoring tool

The RCs should have results-based information at their disposal to be able to assess past programme implementation and achievement. More detailed progress on regional activities implemented under the RO's responsibility, including on the Regional Initiatives, should also be available for the RCs' review, as should include financial information.

246. The IR Team also believes that Council and its committees should closely observe the evolution of the internal governance role of the RCs. If the 2016 round of RCs continues to reveal weaknesses in their guidance and oversight functions, Members may wish to reassess the decision to include the RCs in the internal governance stream. The RCs would continue however to make an important contribution to the global governance stream as set out above.

247. The TCs have gone further than the RCs in organizing themselves for inter-sessional work through bureaux that support follow-up and preparation for Committee sessions. Their bureaux could possibly also support the TCs' internal governance functions. The IR Team makes Recommendation 11 to the effect that Council and TCs should clarify the authority of these bureaux.

Recommendation 11 On TC's scope of action on Internal Governance

Based on the advice of the CCLM, and based upon the above-noted options, the Council and the TCs should clarify the possible role and authority of TC Bureaux during the inter-sessional period.

248. The second issue that constrains the GBs ability to exercise more effective oversight and to hold the Organization accountable is that even the smaller, more informal GBs rarely take the initiative to pursue items not already covered in the standard agenda items provided to them. This has not allowed them to focus their attention on selected strategic or cross-cutting issues from one session to the next in order to develop their own knowledge of how such issues are treated by the Organization and therefore interact more meaningfully with Management. The IR Team believes it is of particular importance for the PC, the FC, and the CCLM to do so as the committees of Council and bring their findings to Council as appropriate. It makes Recommendation 8 to this effect. It also believes that more attention needs to be paid to the qualifications of candidates for the PC, FC, and CCLM, the committees to which Council delegates its functions, and makes Recommendation 9 in this regard, to modify the Qualifications Statement to allow for specific information on previous education and/or experience in the GBs area of work.

Recommendation 8 On tracking issues over time

The PC, FC, and CCLM should set time aside on the agenda to identify cross-cutting or strategic issues to track over time as part of their review of documentation provided for agenda items in its

sessions. This work would be done on an informal basis either by Members who volunteer or as a group. When appropriate, a decision would be made on whether it would be useful to formalize a recommendation to Council on the matter.

Recommendation 9 On qualifications of PC, FC and CCLM candidates

The Qualifications Statement for PC, FC, and CCLM candidates should be modified to include a section with specific information on previous education and/or experience in the respective GBs' areas of work. Regional Groups should continuously engage in a search for potential candidates with the requisite expertise in Rome and in capitals.

249. In addition, audit and evaluation are key sources of information for the GBs on the work of the Organization. The IR Team found that the specification in the IPA that FC consider audits and the PC evaluations is too rigid and allows oversight matters to fall between the cracks. Recommendation 10 calls for the Chairs of the Committees to decide which sections of both types of reports are best handled by the respective Committees, or in the Joint Meeting itself. The IR Team makes Recommendation 16 for closer linkage between the evaluation agenda and the Organizational Outcomes of the reviewed SF.

Recommendation 10 On the review of evaluation and audit reports

The PC and FC should each have the responsibility to review the evaluation and audit information relevant to the scope of work of each body. The PC and FC Chairs should jointly decide whether to refer items to the individual committees or to the Joint Meeting.

Recommendation 16 On the scope of thematic evaluations

The scope of thematic evaluations should focus on the Organizational Outcome level of the Reviewed SF, either through the compilation of 'meta' data, or through specific evaluations designed for this purpose.

250. The IR Team has assessed the Multi-Year Programmes of Work of the Organization, which were intended to strengthen the GBs internal governance functions and their accountability. It found that, on the whole, MYPOWs had played a useful role in the smaller GBs to track when items will be discussed and to document qualitative changes to be introduced in the conduct of the sessions. It makes Recommendation 14 to retain MYPOWs for the Council, PC, FC and CCLM in modified format and Recommendation 15 on MYPOWs for RCs and TCs.

Recommendation 14 On MYPOWs format

For the Council, PC, FC and CCLM, modify the existing format to delete the Results section, and to insert a section on 'Outstanding and strategic issues to be tracked over time'.

Recommendation 15 On MYPOWs for RCs and TCs

For TCs and RCs, the MYPOW should be discontinued, unless the GB itself wishes to continue to prepare and report on it to Council.

251. The position and functions of the Independent Chair of Council were further refined by the IPA and the IR Team found that this is working well at present and contributing to the

effective and efficient management of internal governance. It makes two recommendations to further support this function, Recommendation 7 that the Basic Texts be changed to mention the need for candidates to have previous experience in the functioning of FAO GBs, and Recommendation 6 urging that additional support be provided to any additional functions the ICC is tasked with.

Recommendation 7 On qualifications for the ICC

The Basic Texts dealing with the ICC should be revised to add the words ‘appropriate experience in the functioning of FAO governing bodies’ to the existing text “*appropriate experience in areas relevant to the Organization’s work*”.

Recommendation 6 On support to ICC in case of additional responsibilities

When the ICC is tasked by Members with additional responsibility, additional resources should be provided from amongst the Members.

‘Nuts and Bolts’: operational issues

252. The Review Team also identified a number of ‘Nuts and Bolts’ issues stemming from implementation of the IPA actions that it believes will make a substantial difference in the workings of the governing bodies concerned, and therefore offers them as points for consideration by the Members.

Suggestions for the Council

- a) To capture the richness of their discussions, Council Members may wish to include short summaries of the discussion in Council reports as part of the Chair’s summary or as relevant.
- b) The ICC could convene the IMRG to clarify emerging grey areas in discussion with Senior Management with respect to the relationship between the Regional Groups and the Regional Offices, and to exchange information among the Regional Groups on working methods and best practices to enhance their roles.
- c) The Council’s three Committees and the Joint Meeting could consider ‘tracking for efficiency’ to identify areas of duplication and overlap in order to streamline workflow. Similarly, working methods and agendas should be tracked within the FC to identify areas for further efficiency.

Suggestions for the Evaluation Function

- a) The PC and the Evaluation Committee (Internal) could consider regular interaction to strengthen the contribution of evaluations to both management and GB and reduce any tensions in the dual reporting line.
- b) The PC could consider including the following in the TORs for the independent evaluation of FAO’s evaluation function: ways to enhance the effectiveness of the dual reporting line; the independence of OED to manage its budget once it has been approved and any effects this has on its ability to perform; the implications of OED-led and authored reports for the independence of evaluation findings; how useful and implementable OED recommendations to management have been; the effectiveness of the “evaluation/management response/follow-up report/validation” process in supporting GB guidance and oversight; the PC’s use of evaluation findings in its strategic guidance, priority setting and oversight of FAO.

Suggestions for the Regional Conferences

Now that Chairs remain in place between sessions, more thought could be given to clarifying their responsibilities vis-à-vis the RC membership and the Secretariat. It would contribute to the RCs' value as fora for the exchange of information and experience if Sessions are organized in a way that allows for greater, informal exchange of views among delegates. The priorities identified by regional technical commissions on forests and fisheries could be included as an integral part of RC reports to Council.

Suggestions on definition of Governing Bodies

As presently worded, the definition of GBs contained in the Basic Texts is unclear as to whether it is referring to global or internal governance. Consideration should be given to clarifying that it covers both.

Suggestion on the timing of Council and Conference

As the programme direction and substance of the MTP and PWB have already been reviewed and approved by capitals by the time of Council, Members could consider shortening the existing 60 day consultation period between Council and Conference.

253. The IR Team recognizes that reform is an on-going process that does not always proceed in a straight line. It recognizes the tremendous work that has gone on in the governance reform and the dedication with which Members have undertaken this. It makes these recommendations and proposals in the hope of making a contribution, however minor, to the work underway.