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FINANCE COMMITTEE

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Human Resources Management

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Committee is presented with progress on implementation of human resources initiatives and plans for the current biennium.
- In particular, progress on projects and activities since consideration of the last report by the Committee at its 156th Session in November 2014 is detailed in the present report.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

- Members of the Finance Committee are invited to take note of progress on human resources initiatives.

Draft Advice

The Committee:

- **Noted the progress on human resources initiatives, and of specific updates requested at its 156th Session in November 2014.**

1. The Medium Term Plan 2014-17 (Reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget 2016-17¹ contains proposals for improvements to the human resources capacity of the Organization.

Concomitantly, progress on human resource initiatives has continued since the last progress report was presented to the Finance Committee at its 156th Session in November 2014. A summary of achievements, as well as objectives and initiatives is presented below.

Overview of current human resources initiatives

Performance Management, Development and Learning

2. Enhancements to the Organization's performance management policy have been introduced aimed at promoting increased management accountability, and introducing clearer, related processes. The revised process and policy is being implemented in a simpler performance management system, which is a talent management platform already adopted by the Organization in 2012 for learning and development. A number of UN organizations (UNESCO, UNAIDS, UNFCC, OPWC, ICT, etc.) have also adopted the same platform for learning and performance management and FAO is benefitting from their experience in this regard.

3. The new platform allows and provides for: (i) better integration of performance management with development and learning, (ii) continuous measuring of progress of objectives and goals, (iii) easy to use tools for managers and staff to monitor and review progress. A project team was established in January to examine the design and new workflows, configure, test, establish guidelines and train users in the new system and process. A major emphasis will be placed on training users on goal setting and providing effective feedback.

4. In parallel, procedures and policies are being formulated to establish a coherent performance management policy framework, to provide for mechanisms that recognise high-performance and address under-performance, as well as support staff development. The target date for the introduction of the revised system, policies and procedures is the first half of 2015.

5. Work to support the development of FAO values and competencies is ongoing. During 2015, competency-based interview techniques will be introduced for recruitment in the General Service (GS) category. The assessment and development of managerial competencies for FAO managers continues with the redesign of the *Effective leadership programme* and the launch of a new middle management development programme. The latter was piloted in 2014 and will be offered on a regular basis to staff members at P2 to P4 level (international and national staff). The programme is a blended learning programme, delivered virtually and aims at developing the managerial capacity of middle managers. The pilot attracted a large number of participants from decentralized offices and based on the positive feedback from the 50 participants who attended the pilot, the programme will be formally established.

6. The assessment of managerial and leadership competencies is now an integral part of the recruitment process for FAORs and Senior Managers, who have the option, upon recruitment to benefit from executive coaching to further enhance their leadership competencies. Finally, the enhanced performance evaluation and management system will host the assessment of leadership competencies (as well as core competencies), with the purpose of establishing baselines for leadership competencies.

7. The learning strategy continues to focus on decentralized offices with the expansion of the FAOR Programme and Community. After the launch of a menu of learning and performance support resources on resource mobilization at the end of 2014 through the FAO learning platform, additional themes will be launched in 2015, together with a peer to peer community for FAORs.

8. In 2015, a new learning programme on Managing for Results will be designed and launched, to build the capacity for development results throughout the Organization.

¹ C 2015/3 paragraphs 98-103

9. A pilot for e-learning language courses was introduced with success in 2014 and its access will be expanded to those staff members in decentralized offices who do not have access to language training.
10. The introduction of improved and specialized training and staff development products will enable the discontinuation of less effective generic instruments and courses, which in turn may lead to overall efficiency and savings.

Appointment and Selection Procedures - Rosters

11. Published generic job profiles (GJP) now cover 80% of GS positions and 70% of professional positions, representing 34 professional and 14 GS job families. The consistent implementation of the GJP supports the standardization of the classification process and staff mobility and therefore promotes horizontal career development.
12. Revised selection and appointment procedures for professional staff, international and national positions were introduced at the end of May 2014. This has led to the shortening of the overall timeframe for recruitment. To further shorten the selection process, the duration of vacancy announcements for professional positions has been reduced from four to three weeks in December 2014. Further reduction of the recruitment cycle is expected through additional deployment of iRecruitment and the introduction of online screening questions in iRecruitment.
13. Minimum qualification requirements for posts in the Professional and above categories were introduced to allow flexibility to count years of relevant work experience in lieu of an advanced university degree and thereby expand the pool of qualified candidates and diversify the Organization's workforce.
14. Recruitment processes and systems are being reviewed as part of the HR Infrastructure project that was launched in January with the objectives to streamline and standardize HR processes, to expand the functionality of HR Technology, and to improve quality and compliance of the HR services. An FAO outreach programme was developed to attract the best qualified candidates, which also expands due consideration to geographic and gender representation.
15. The review of the appointment and selection process for staff members in the General Service category, including the temporary assistance pool at headquarters, has started. This will lead to increased consistency in the recruitment decisions and to streamlining of procedures, in particular by strengthening the initial short-listing process. Progress continues on the implementation of the Framework Agreement between FAO, IFAD and WFP for the collaboration on recruitment, selection and appointment of General Service staff at Rome Headquarters. The Recruitment Services of the three Rome-based agencies pursue their work to review existing provisions and processes, as well as system issues, to ensure a successful implementation of the agreement and increased harmonization of practices and rules in this area.
16. The Corporate Professional Roster (CPR) is being put in place at FAO using the iRecruitment system to avail the pipeline of vetted candidates to deploy for professional vacancies. The CPR Guidelines will be finalized after ongoing testing and launched by March 2015. To-date, there are 51 pre-selected candidates in the CPR.

Progress on geographic representation and gender balance

17. Efforts are underway to increase the number of equitably-represented countries, and to pursue gender balance, without prejudice to the primordial consideration for merit. In this regard, the Organization is engaging a high profile internet and social-media based employment service provider to expand dissemination of vacancies for posts in the Professional and above categories, including in targeted non-and under-represented countries. In February, the "Specialist Search Function" will be launched and training offered to the hiring departments and regional offices to search for qualified talent using databases of internationally recognized, development publications and outlets. This will also enable hiring departments to fill consultancy and project vacancies faster. Up-to-date data on the geographic and gender representation is provided in the HR data pack.

Corporate Mobility Policy

18. Following the introduction of the Corporate Mobility Policy in December 2013, an annual mobility exercise was undertaken in 2014. Lessons learnt were reviewed in sessions with staff across the span of the Organization. Based on this review, and additional comments received from staff and managers of the Organization, the mobility policy and programme was revised in February 2015.

19. The principal change is that the heads of departments and offices, in close consultation with heads of decentralised offices, will take the lead in, and be accountable for, the planning for staff mobility in their respective fields of specialization of the department or office. OHR will support managers and staff throughout the process. Furthermore, the distinction between rotational and non-rotational posts will no longer apply.

20. Prior to issuance of the revised policy and programme, 96 geographic assignments were processed within the Organization during the course of 2014.

Workforce Planning and Talent Management

21. The results of the skills mix exercise carried out at the start of 2014 continue to be used throughout the 2014-15 implementation cycle to guide activities in recruitment, mobility, learning and development. In 2015, OHR will develop a workforce planning concept along with detailed processes to be introduced as of the start of the next biennium in 2016. As part of this exercise, particular emphasis will be given to ensuring that the adequate tools (e.g. systems, workforce planning metrics, etc.) are available to support this endeavour. Work will also begin in 2015 on a Talent Management concept.

Streamlining and Increased Efficiency

(i) HR Servicing - Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

22. The SOP project on HR areas in Headquarters, such as recruitment, post and performance management, started in September 2014. This activity is part of a broader initiative related to the HR Infrastructure project underway in 2015, which will include areas of governance and productivity management across key HR processes and services. In particular, performance indicators will be identified, tracked and measured based on which Service Level Agreements will be established.

23. To date, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been published for 120 HR procedures (in the area of staff and non-staff servicing) and a further 25 are being finalized (for NPO and GS recruitment). It is planned that during 2015, SOPs will be defined for all other key Headquarters-based HR processes (project and senior level recruitment, post management, social security etc.).

(ii) Automation of HR processes (Payroll and Benefits and Social Security)

a) Automation of human resources processes - GRMS

24. As previously reported, a number of initiatives in the human resources area to automate processes have been completed or are in the process of being finalised. These changes simplify and streamline the work and also reduce the level of errors due to manual intervention in the systems.

25. The payment of living allowances for the non-staff employees continues to be incorporated into payroll. This change will reduce processing errors, and further strengthening of means of the project for linkage of payroll and certification to travel systems in on-going, with expected finalization in April 2015.

26. Another initiative close to finalization is the automatic generation by GRMS of the terms of employment of non-staff employees, on the basis of the HR approval of the request for employment in the system. It is expected that this facility will be available within the first half of 2015.

27. Efforts to further streamline processes and make better use of systems will be actively pursued in 2015, in particular the option of increasing self-service tools for staff and managers. Self-service tools will expedite the processes, as employees and managers will be submitting their requests directly

online, thereby releasing time of HR servicing colleagues from data entry work or initiation of personnel actions and allowing them to focus on more substantive work.

b) Social Security Processes

28. Effective December 2014, a new automated self-reporting tool has been introduced for Headquarters-based staff members in FAO and WFP. The self-service facility allows participants to file electronically claims for service incurred accidents or illnesses. This change will gradually be extended to staff in FAO and WFP regional offices and country offices.

29. Review is also underway of the After-service Medical Coverage tools to address the extra information and volume related to the management of WFP local staff that are now serviced by FAO in the area of pension, insurances and compensation (see also paragraph 35 below). The system will require an overhaul and it is expected that this activity will start in April and be completed by the end of 2015.

(iii) ERP- HR data quality

30. During 2014, a total of 61 standardized HR Reports have been released in key areas of focus for HR (gender and geographic distribution, succession planning etc.). These are currently in the process of being rolled out to users, in Headquarters and regional offices. This result permits more up-to-the-minute and reliable data to be readily used in management decisions. The automation of some key reports should also contribute to reduce the burden on the HR function in responding to ad hoc requests, and allow HR staff more time to dedicate to analysis and planning, collaborating more closely with departments and offices, to better support their needs.

31. An HR Dashboard has been designed for senior management use to permit rapid access to data in key HR areas, to support decision making processes.

(iv) Medical Insurance Coverage

32. The Organization has finalized the Single Master Policy for Medical Insurances, which merges the former four single insurance plan agreements, mainly on medical insurances, with different service providers. The contract with the new claims processor started in January 2015. Through economies of scale and streamlined provider management, savings in insurance costs are expected to be generated in the coming years.

33. FAO also concluded the new Single Master Policy Non-Medical that covers the former eleven different non-medical insurance plans. This policy includes "All Risks, Fidelity Guarantee, Third Party Liability" insurances.

34. As a result, efforts will now focus on the improvement of the internal financial reporting, to strengthen continuous monitoring of the relevant financial transactions related to the various medical insurance plans. This will involve a number of internal organizational divisions, including Finance and IT, and encompass development, testing and implementation. The activity is scheduled to start in April 2015 and to be completed by June.

35. In 2014, FAO participated in the review and design of processes to address the management of some additional 3,400 WFP locally recruited staff and 5,000 WFP consultants, previously managed by UNDP and transferred to the FAO/WFP Staff Pension Committee, Advisory Committee on Compensation Claims and Joint Advisory Committee on Medical Coverage umbrella as of 1 July 2014. A letter of agreement has been signed with WFP on the provision of social security services for these employees.

(v) HR Service Delivery Model

36. A project to develop and introduce an HR Service Delivery Model, in close consultation with HR staff in decentralised offices will be launched to allow a review of the HR functions performed throughout the Organization and *inter alia* further consolidate administrative transactions.

Updates on Specific Human Resources Items requested by the Finance Committee

(i) Deployment of iRecruitment and GRMS

37. In January 2015, in addition to professional level vacancies, recruitment for General Service posts based at Headquarters and national professional officer posts are processed through iRecruitment. The use of iRecruitment is currently being tested for emergency operations project positions. The same undertaking, to integrate and standardise recruitment procedures, for FAO Representatives, Deputy FAO Representatives and staff on project funded positions will be pursued in 2015.

(ii) JPs and APOs

38. Since 2011, 43 Junior Professionals (JPs) have joined FAO on initial two year appointments, 19 of which came on board between June and August 2014.

39. As previously advised, from the 18 JPs hired under the first cohort, 12 have been retained and are funded by the host units (i.e. 8 JPs under a fixed term contract and 4 employed under non staff human resources contracts). Furthermore it has been decided that after the two first years of appointment as a JPO, funds will be made available for a minimum of two years to retain former JPs, subject to satisfactory performance. This will apply in 2015 to the six JPs recruited in 2013, and in parallel a recruitment campaign to fill the six vacated JP positions is being developed.

40. Concerning the APOs, at the current moment, the retention policy for APOs relates to the cost-sharing arrangements. These agreements foresee that extensions of appointments beyond the maximum duration be funded in a cost-sharing arrangement between FAO and some of the resource partners..

41. During the period 2000 to 2014, 242 APOs were retained or rehired under some form of contractual arrangements (non-staff or staff member appointment), which corresponds to a rehire rate of 63% of former APOs. FAO continues to look into measures that could be introduced, on the understanding that any change will have to be agreed with the donors.