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Organización
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para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

FINANCE COMMITTEE

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Progress Report on Human Resources Issues (including Recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit on Human Resources Management Issues)

Introduction

1. This report documents the latest position and projected targets for progress on the documents related to human resources (HR) management so far considered by the Finance Committee. The report seeks to bring together in one document a statement of progress on a range of related HR issues which have arisen as a result of the report to the Finance Committee in 2001 (FC 97/15) and the report of the UN Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on *Management and Administration in FAO* (JIU/REP/2002/8) as well as issues arising out of the Medium Term Plan 2004-2009.
2. The attached table updates the last progress report prepared by the Human Resources Management Division (AFH) for the Committee. It also provides an indication of the source of each issue/activity and outlines the current position and the targets for action on the proposals related to HR made in the JIU report.
3. Target dates have been indicated for most actions within the document. However, it should be stressed that these are subject to the availability of resources to deliver these programmes. In particular, resources for implementation of new HR initiatives within the Medium Term Plan need to be identified. Furthermore, the HR function remains without an operational Human Resource Management Information System. Clearly, without such resources, the deadlines indicated here place tremendous pressure on the current systems and staff and may be optimistic. It should be noted, however, that work on the Oracle HRMS has started using a phased approach and is expected to be fully implemented by 2006.

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Issues/Activities	Tasks	Performance Indicators	Timeline	Responsibility
Human Resources Planning				
<p><u>Medium Term Plan 2004-2009</u></p> <p>To deliver the organizational objectives, the role of AFH in HR planning must be clear. There is a need for a strategic overview of the human resources within the Organization using trends, directions and objectives to develop new and innovative HR policies.</p>	<p>In order to provide meaningful HR planning information, AFH needs to be able to hold and access comprehensive data on both individuals and posts.</p> <p>The data required at individual level includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basic demographic data; • qualifications; • experience (pre-FAO and within FAO); • career history within FAO (promotion rates, mobility record etc.); • competencies; • appraisal data; • development history; • career development plan; and • personal development plan. 	<p>Human Resources Management System (HRMS) that provides the indicated types of information will be in place.</p>	<p>Dependent on phased introduction of necessary HRMS components (December 2005)</p>	<p>Human Resources Division (AFH)</p>
<p><u>FC 97/15</u></p> <p>AFH will hold one annual meeting with each of the headquarters departments and offices and the regional offices to support them in analyzing and planning their human resources needs and in developing a human resources plan.</p>	<p>Consultations have been undertaken with departmental managers to establish a shared understanding of HR planning and to identify essential HR planning.</p>	<p>Each department, office and regional office would have an agreed human resources plan that establishes the targets necessary to meet its HR needs, as well as the Organizational HR goals. The HR plan should be aligned with PWB plans.</p>	<p>To be aligned with PWB process for 2006-2007 and thereafter</p>	<p>AFH/Line Managers/Office of Programme, Budget and Evaluation (PBE)</p>

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<p><u>JIU Report Recommendation 8(a)</u> FAORs should be provided with adequate human resources and guidance to fulfil their responsibilities, and the Director-General should, in particular:</p> <p>(a) Develop a standard description of the competencies, skills and experience required of FAO Representatives...</p>	<p>The functions and responsibilities of FAORs are described in detail in Manual Section 118. Based on these, a standard profile for the posts of FAORs has already been developed embodying the minimum requirements in terms of education, experience, abilities and skills. The Programme and Finance Committees had been informed of the basic competency requirements for posts of FAORs at their joint session of September 2000 (document JM 2000/2).</p>	<p>The functional statement for FAORs is being revised and re-issued to cover the new role in project operations. The profile of the FAOR is also being amended to place more emphasis on managerial/operational skills.</p>	<p>September 2003</p>	<p>Office for Coordination of Normative, Operational and Decentralized Activities (OCD)/AFH</p>
Performance Management				
<p><u>FC 97/15</u> AFH will work with PBE and departmental managers to improve and link individual performance plans to the Organization's programme plan and to strengthen the current performance management process.</p>	<p>In the new Performance Planning and Review System (PPRS) each staff member would have a work plan that would identify individual objectives and expected outputs linked to programme objectives, career development and training needs and managerial skill requirements.</p>	<p>New PPRS would be implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot Dept • All Staff 	<p>Beginning 2004 (dependent on HRMS)</p> <p>Beginning 2005 (dependent on HRMS)</p>	<p>AFH</p>
Strengthening the Recruitment Process – Professional Recruitment				
Time taken to fill posts				
<p><u>FC 97/15</u> The time taken is very long and frequently good candidates are lost due to the excessive delay. AFH will take action to reduce this time.</p>	<p>The task would be to reduce substantially the average time taken to fill professional vacancies.</p>	<p>The target is to reduce recruitment time to 140 days.</p>	<p>December 2004</p>	<p>AFH</p>

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<p>(a) <i>Support to line managers</i> - AFH will strengthen advisory and support services to line managers, monitor the filling of posts and provide guidelines and increased training of line managers</p> <p>(b) <i>Increased use of technology for issuance of vacancy announcements</i> - The time taken for the approval and translation of vacancy announcements will be reduced.</p>	<p>Revised guidelines were issued on the FAO Intranet and training of line managers began in June 2003. Departmental workshops on preparation of job descriptions will begin in the latter part of 2003.</p> <p>AFH is monitoring divisions to ensure that they routinely acknowledge the receipt of applications.</p> <p>A job description data bank will be included as part of the HRMS implementation.</p>	<p>All managers would be fully conversant with the recruitment process, as reflected by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • buy-in to the goal by managers; • availability of guidelines; and an effective support system. <p>As a result, there has been an improvement in the acknowledgement of applications.</p> <p>80% of all vacancy announcements would be approved, translated and posted within an average time of 20 days.</p>	<p>October 2003</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>December 2004</p>	<p>AFH</p> <p>AFH</p> <p>AFH</p>
<p><u>JIU Recommendation 11(a) and (b)</u> In the short term and in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce the excessive number of vacant posts; • accelerate the recruitment process;... <p>the Director-General should:</p> <p>(a) Instruct AFH to issue in both electronic and paper form a compendium of all present vacancies, and ask departments and offices to promptly initiate the advertisement of all vacant posts;</p> <p>(b) Consider delegating to the Regional Representatives – on a pilot basis and with appropriate guidance and monitoring from departments at headquarters – the authority to recommend to PSSC candidates for established posts in Regional Offices up to the P-4 level...</p>	<p>AFH has a vacancy monitoring system which reports regularly to senior management on all professional vacancies. Production of a further compendium would thus be redundant.</p> <p>Consultations to be undertaken among HQ departments and Regional Offices (RO) to determine feasibility of establishing appropriate criteria for ROs to evaluate candidates in this context.</p>	<p>The level of vacant professional posts would be reduced from an average of 21% of established posts (July 2002) to an average of 15% by December 2003. As at May 2003, 18% of established posts were vacant. Analysis and appropriate proposals would be prepared for consideration by the Human Resources Committee (HRC).</p>	<p>December 2003</p> <p>March 2004</p>	<p>Depts/AFH to monitor</p> <p>Depts/ ROs/OCD/AFH</p>

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Moving from passive to active recruitment				
<p><u>FC 97/15</u> At present the Organization relies solely on candidates' willingness to apply to vacancy announcements posted on the FAO website.</p> <p><i>(a) Age Profile – Junior Professionals</i> – In 2000 the average age at the time of external professional recruitment was 43 years.</p> <p><i>(b) Equitable Geographical Representation</i> - The breakdown by representation status as at 1/1/2000 was as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • equitably represented: 63; • under-represented: 7; • non-represented: 27; and • over-represented: 83. <p><i>(c) Improving gender balance</i> - The percentage of professional women as at 1/1/2000 at all locations was 24% of total professional staff.</p>	<p>The composition of applicant fields will be improved through targeted advertising.</p> <p>Number of young professionals will be increased by 10% from 365 to the PWB 2004-2005 target of 403.</p> <p>The following specific actions will be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • posting of FAO vacancies on other websites visited by applicants, e.g. Monster.com; • attendance at professional gatherings and distribution of material on FAO; and • direct approaches to certain institutions/governments. <p>The draft Gender Action Plan has been developed and circulated to parties for consultation. The Plan proposes the establishment of both corporate and departmental targets.</p>	<p>FAO would move to an active and targeted approach to professional recruitment to redress national, gender and age imbalances.</p> <p>The average age at the time of professional recruitment would be reduced.</p> <p>The number of under-represented countries would be reduced. It is noted that the Conference decision to request the Council to review the geographic distribution methodology may impact on how results in this area are to be measured.</p> <p>The percentage of female professional staff would increase to 35%.</p>	<p>On-going</p> <p>December 2005</p> <p>December 2005</p> <p>December 2005</p>	<p>Depts/AFH</p> <p>Depts/AFH</p> <p>Depts/AFH</p> <p>Depts/AFH</p>
Recruitment of FAO Representatives				
<p><u>JIU Recommendation 8(b)</u> FAORs should be provided with adequate human resources and guidance to fulfil their responsibilities, and the Director-General should, in particular:...</p>				

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(b) Ensure the selection of FAO representatives is an open and fair process which duly takes into account previous experience acquired in the Organization/United Nations system.	<p>A roster of suitable candidates meeting the requirements of the standard profile has been maintained for many years.</p> <p>External and internal candidates are welcome and applications are systematically acknowledged.</p> <p>A roster VA has recently been issued on the Internet and is expected to lead to additional candidates. When a vacancy occurs, a short list is drawn from the roster. The selection process is thorough with due consideration to gender and geographical balance. Candidates are interviewed and assessed by a panel of senior officers and, if selected, are presented to the host government for clearance.</p>	<p>The roster is being computerized to facilitate its maintenance and use and to allow a tracking system of candidates.</p> <p>All existing and new candidates will be screened and, if suitable, retained on the roster. All candidates to receive an acknowledgement and confirmation whether they are on the roster.</p> <p>The roster VA will be re-issued periodically.</p>	<p>July 2003</p> <p>August-October 2003</p> <p>Every year</p>	<p>OCD</p> <p>OCD</p> <p>OCD/AFH</p>
General Service Staffing				
<p><u>FC 97/15</u></p> <p><i>Review of general service work</i> - The review will modernize job roles, administrative support structures and improve career development opportunities for staff.</p>	<p>Rationalized occupational structures, updated job profiles and clear career paths will be developed reflecting current work requirements and the impact of technology and providing competences and skills requirements</p>	<p>Occupational structures would be rationalized improving career mobility. Selection and training would be based on competencies and skills reflecting changed work requirements and increased use of technology. Career profile of staff would reflect the increased levels of responsibility and skill required by the category.</p>	<p>Agreement with staff associations managers and HRC is to be reached by September 2003.</p> <p>Implementation to commence in January 2004.</p>	<p>AFH</p>

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Staff and Career Development and Mobility				
<p><u>JIU Recommendation 11(c) and (d)</u> In the short term and in order to:...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide the Secretariat with a more flexible, dynamic and responsive workforce;... <p>the Director-General should:</p> <p>(c) Ensure that consultants and retired experts do not serve as a long-term alternative to regular staffing...</p> <p>(d) Undertake a cost-benefit analysis of establishing a managed mobility system for Professionals</p>	<p>AFH already has in place policies and procedures that limit the long-term use of consultants and retirees.</p> <p>As part of a wider programme of career development, AFH will undertake a study and develop a pilot programme of planned mobility.</p>	<p>AFH/AFDS continue to monitor the use of consultants and retirees.</p> <p>Career planning system would be implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot Dept • All Staff <p>Analysis would be prepared and if appropriate, a new policy developed.</p>	<p>On-going</p> <p>March 2004 September 2004</p> <p>January 2005.</p>	<p>AFH/Management Support Service (AFDS)</p> <p>AFH</p>
Management Development				
<p><u>Medium Term Plan (MTP)</u> The improvement of programme delivery particularly in an interdisciplinary environment, requires the active assessment and development of the skills and competencies of staff. The MTP identifies as a priority the need to establish core managerial and professional competencies, assess staff against these and provide an active program of development for managers to acquire the necessary competencies.</p>	<p>In consultation with staff and managers, develop core managerial and professional competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess skills and competencies of staff against core competencies; and • Identify development needs for staff 	<p>Completed competencies framework for Professional and Director category staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of existing competency frameworks • Validation and Buy in • Implementation • Working group established • Paper presented and approved • Trial in one Department • Development needs identified <p>Establish a development programme to meet competency requirements</p>	<p>March 2004</p>	<p>AFH, with Line Managers</p>

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Supportive Working Environment				
<p><u>Medium Term Plan (MTP)</u> In order to be able to attract and retain staff of the highest standard of efficiency and technical competence, FAO must maintain a work environment that recognizes work/family issues as a priority for employees.</p>	<p>In accordance with MTP, paragraph 799(b)(vi)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply greater flexibility in working arrangements, including part-time arrangements and teleworking. 	<p>Flexitime proposals being considered</p>	<p>March 2004</p>	<p>AFH</p>
<p>(a) <i>Teleworking</i> <u>FC 97/15</u> A teleworking policy that contributes to creating a more flexible workplace has been introduced at headquarters for a trial period of one year.</p>	<p>AFH has submitted an evaluation of the trial period experience to HRC for consideration.</p>	<p>The recommendations of the HRC would be submitted to the Director-General for decision.</p> <p>If approved, a new policy will be introduced.</p>	<p>Completed/ submitted July 2003 to HRC</p> <p>December 2003</p>	<p>AFH</p> <p>AFH</p>
<p>(b) <i>Spouse Employment</i> <u>FC 97/15</u> The existing policy prohibits the employment of the spouse of a staff member, although the Plan of Action for Women in Development (C 95/14-Sup 1-Rev 1, para. 135) highlights the need for a change. <u>JIU Recommendation 12</u> To improve gender balance among the Secretariat's Professional staff and conform to policy statements by the United Nations system Chief Executives Board, the Director-General should modify relevant staff rules and sections of the Manual that forbid the employment of spouses and staff members.</p>	<p>AFH has developed a draft policy for review by senior management prior to consultations with the staff representatives.</p>	<p>Staff Rule 302.409 would be amended as may be deemed appropriate following the consultations.</p>	<p>Proposal is to be reviewed and discussed with staff representatives by December 2003.</p>	<p>AFH</p>

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<p>(c) <i>Family related matters</i> <u>FC 97/15</u> As in the UN common system generally, AFH is conducting a review of the policies in member states and other international organizations on maternity, paternity and parental leave and on the treatment of non-traditional marriages/domestic partnerships.</p>	<p>AFH will identify areas where it would be feasible for the Organization to introduce new/updated policies.</p>	<p>Policy proposals would be developed and consultations undertaken with management and staff.</p>	<p>Action in this area has been delayed as the International Civil Service Commission has indicated its intention to study several of these issues. It was originally foreseen that this ICSC review would take place in 2003, however, due to the pressure of other work, it has been postponed.</p>	<p>AFH</p>
Streamlining Procedures				
<p><u>FC 97/15</u> The increasing devolution of responsibility for the day-to-day management of staff to line managers requires the simplification and streamlining of rules and procedures applicable to staff.</p>	<p>Modify the structure of the Administrative Manual. Remove procedures, guidelines, checklists and forms that are subject to frequent changes. Include statement of responsibilities and accountability for each Manual Section. Make available an Intranet version of the manual.</p>	<p>Action plan for implementation of streamlining of manual approved by management . Available on Intranet. Final implementation</p>	<p>Completed. End 2003 End 2004.</p>	<p>AFH</p>
Human Resources Task Force				
<p><u>JIU Recommendation 10</u> The Director General should: (a) establish a task force composed of HR management specialists and programme managers with a timebound mandate to prepare a comprehensive plan of action for the reform of human resources management policies and practices; (b) consider allowing staff representatives full participation in, or at least direct access to, this task force; (c) resume meeting personally with representatives of recognised staff associations at reasonable intervals.</p>	<p>Comments While FAO has no objection in principle to the establishment of a task force to make inputs into a plan of action for human resource management reform, any such mechanism would need to take account of, and should complement, the actions already underway as outlined in the various papers on HR management issues presented to the Finance Committee since 2001 (ref. FC 97/15, FC 99/10 and FC 102/23) and the reform agenda contained in the Medium Term Plan 2004-2009. In particular, a task force process should not divert resources or focus from the implementation of existing agreed action plans, as described in this document. In addition, the establishment of a task force needs to also take into account existing staff/management consultative processes and should not dilute accountability for achieving agreed targets.</p>			