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Agenda item 10

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Other business

For approval

Executive Board documents are available on WFP's website (<https://executiveboard.wfp.org>).

Proposal for the review of the recommendations stemming from the governance review and establishment of a working group of the Executive Board

Background

In mid-2022, the Executive Board Bureau agreed to undertake an assessment of WFP's governance frameworks and processes to identify opportunities for practical ways to improve governance efficiency and effectiveness. The Executive Board Bureau established a steering committee made up of members nominated from each electoral list for the management of the governance review. The committee appointed an independent consultant to conduct the governance review between February and May 2023.

The [final report](#) and its 14 recommendations¹ were submitted by the consultant to the steering committee in April 2023 and endorsed for submission to the Bureau in May 2023. Initial high-level discussions of the Board on the subsequent process took place at the 2023 annual session of the Board and the President wrote to the entire membership in July and August 2023 in order to share the governance review report and its recommendations, indicating that further discussions and engagement on this matter would take place in the autumn.

It is also noted that the President had written to the Executive Director on 17 August 2023 in order to officially transmit the governance review report, asking her to share it with WFP senior management in preparation for subsequent engagement with the Board.

¹ The list of recommendations is available in annex II of this document.

Focal point:

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Consultations with the Board membership

Two informal consultations of the membership on the recommendations of the governance review were organized. The first one on 26 September 2023 included a presentation of the recommendations by the independent consultant and allowed for a first discussion of the Board on the merit and substance of the recommendations made. The second consultation took place on 11 October 2023 and, in addition to further discussions by the membership on the recommendations, also constituted an opportunity to engage with WFP management and oversight offices in order to obtain their views and feedback on the recommendations made and any input on their implementation.

In concluding these consultations, the President indicated that further discussions would take place in the Executive Board Bureau to determine the way forward for the implementation of the recommendations.

Proposal on the way forward for the review and implementation of the recommendations

The Bureau met on 30 October 2023 and on the basis of the discussions that had taken place at the informal consultations, determined the following:

- To establish a working group tasked with reviewing the whole set of recommendations in more detail in order to draw up a proposal on which recommendations should be endorsed by the Board. The working group would develop an implementation plan, including a matrix with actions to be undertaken, timelines, key stakeholders and required resources.
- The working group would first determine whether some of the recommendations could be implemented swiftly by the Secretariat.
- The working group would establish a road map for its work and would be invited to present its final report to the Board no later than its 2024 annual session. Further to that process, regular updates would be provided to the Board on the implementation of the recommendations.

The proposed terms of reference for the establishment of the working group are available in annex I of this document.

Draft decision*

The Board approves the establishment of a working group on the governance review, as defined in the terms of reference submitted in annex I of document WFP/EB.2/2023/10-A/Rev.1.

The Board requests the Bureau to constitute the working group and to ensure that any follow-up to the proceedings of the working group be made as described in its terms of reference.

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the decisions and recommendations document issued at the end of the session.

ANNEX I

Terms of reference for the working group on the governance review

Purpose

1. At its 2023 second regular session, the Board established a working group to conduct a review of its governance structure, based on the recommendations provided by an independent consultant as well as other governance initiatives which the working group may deem appropriate, and to prepare and submit to the Board an implementation plan for all the selected recommendations. The implementation plan will include specific actions to be undertaken, a timeline, a list of key stakeholders and, where needed, budgetary requirements.

Composition of the working group

2. The Executive Board will be represented in the working group by three members per each electoral list of Member States. Each list will designate its representatives and communicate their names to the Bureau. Additional members from the electoral lists will be able to participate in the meetings of the working group as observers. Observers will be able to deliver statements but will not participate in the decision-making process of the working group.
3. At its first meeting, the working group will elect one chairperson and two vice-chairpersons. The chairperson and the vice-chairpersons will be elected from different electoral lists.
4. The Secretary to the Executive Board will provide the necessary support to facilitate the meetings of the working group.

Meetings

5. The first meeting of the working group will be called by the President of the Board. The President will chair the first segment of the meeting, up to the election of the chairperson and vice-chairpersons of the working group. Subsequent meetings will be called by the chairperson or, in the chairperson's absence, by the vice-chairpersons.
6. After each meeting, a brief note for the record will be drafted and circulated to the members of the working group.
7. Meetings of the working group shall not be public.

Functions

8. The working group will:
 - establish a road map for its work, with clear timelines and milestones;
 - make a thorough review of all the recommendations in the report on the governance review and possibly suggest additional recommendations stemming from other governance initiatives;
 - establish a first set of recommendations for immediate implementation by the Secretariat with an indicative timeline, a list of key stakeholders and any budgetary requirements;
 - engage with the relevant WFP senior managers designated by the Executive Director and with the oversight functions in order to obtain their input and suggestions on the implementation of the recommendations; and
 - prepare an implementation plan for all remaining recommendations to be taken forward in addition to those flagged for immediate implementation by the Secretariat; the plan will include specific actions to be undertaken, a timeline, a list of key stakeholders and any budgetary requirements.

Deliverables

9. The chairperson will report regularly to the Executive Board Bureau on the progress made by the working group.
10. On the conclusion of its activities, the working group will issue a report to the Executive Board for its review and approval. It is envisaged that such report be presented no later than the 2024 annual session of the Board. The report will include the implementation plan for the recommendations, as defined in paragraph 9. An intermediate oral update on the progress made by the working group will be presented to the Board at its 2024 first regular session.
11. If any delay is foreseen in the proceedings of the working group, the chairperson should promptly inform the Executive Board Bureau and seek its guidance.

ANNEX II

Recommendations from the governance review

The following table presents the 14 recommendations from the independent consultant's final report on the governance.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE REVIEWED BY THE WORKING GROUP
<p>1. Revisit the format and agenda of the formal Board sessions in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align the sessions with the governance frameworks (strategy, policy, oversight and accountability) • Introduce an annual strategy retreat for the Board members and WFP leadership team • Start every formal Executive Board session with a strategic discussion with the Executive Director on a selected topic agreed by the Executive Board Bureau members • Include on meeting agendas only mandatory items and reports that require strategic discussion or a decision • Discontinue side events as they do not add any value to the governance role of the Executive Board
<p>2. Rationalize and simplify Board documents to facilitate strategic discussions and decisions including formats, word limits and information provided to achieve smart reporting: "strategic input for strategic output".</p>
<p>3. Update the policy formulation framework, define roles and responsibilities, as well as clear processes and criteria for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required steps and timeframe to formulate or update a policy and follow up the implementation • Maximum number, format and frequency of informal consultations and other informal meetings for the formulation or update of each policy • Use of new technologies and existing digital tools to increase efficiency and engagement with the Board members when collecting input and feedback (e.g. online consultation), as well as follow-up of the implementation • Stakeholder engagement • Planning of implementation and budgeting processes when adopting or updating new policies • Board reporting and engagement to enable the necessary strategic discussions at the required stages of policy formulation
<p>4. Conduct the planned policy framework review as a part of the current governance initiative rather than a stand-alone exercise to identify the potential gaps and the steps necessary to address identified issues.</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE REVIEWED BY THE WORKING GROUP
<p>5. Revisit and update the oversight framework to address the identified issues concerning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential overlaps and risk of contradicting or disconnected recommendations from the oversight bodies reporting on the same or related risks and issues • Data collection, assessment and reporting cycles of the different oversight bodies and their impact on the capacity and resources of the WFP teams • Complexity, length and late submission of the Board documents and the impact of the strategic governance role of the Executive Board • Rationalization and simplification of the Board documents reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), the Finance Committee of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) • Existing follow-up mechanisms and the potential gaps concerning the recommendations of the oversight bodies (e.g. Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), the Finance Committee of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Independent Oversight Advisory Committee (IOAC), the Office of the Inspector General, evaluations, the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services, etc.) • Frequency and content of the informal Board meetings and assessment of their relevance (e.g. to eliminate the risk of repetition or lack of efficiency)
<p>6. Rationalize and simplify reporting to make it suitable for strategic discussions and decisions related to accountability.</p>
<p>7. Define the links between key concepts like “strategy”, “policy” and “enablers” to ensure a good understanding by Board members when executing their governance role.</p>
<p>8. Redesign the induction session for new Board Members and introduce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training on good governance • refresher sessions during the year (online or in-person) • delegates’ handbook • automated monitoring of the outgoing and incoming member state representatives
<p>9. Digital transformation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digitalization of the relevant Board processes (e.g. online consultation), meetings, meeting registration and access and comment on Board documents would help representations with limited resources keep up with the busy Board calendar and engage more actively in Board discussions.
<p>10. Introduce global ethics and integrity benchmarks, including a code of conduct for Executive Board members including a cooling off period for Board member representatives when joining WFP as staff members</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE REVIEWED BY THE WORKING GROUP

11. Revisit and improve the consensus building processes and platforms including:

- Format, content, purpose, frequency, and reporting of the informal meetings to ensure for the Board to have the required discussions and provide strategic direction for WFP. All written documentation and statements should be submitted electronically in advance, and meetings should focus on discussion. The various types of meetings should be assessed to see if some could be replaced by written processes using the existing online platform
- CSPs: Written online consultations should take place before the informal consultation meetings to ensure that all technical questions have been raised and addressed. The meetings should focus on discussion, with very short presentations at the beginning. Consideration of CSPs at formal Board sessions should be limited to the reading of the relevant draft decisions and ceremonial gaveling to mark their adoption

12. Revisit the roles and responsibilities, tenure, and the ways of working of the Executive Board Bureau to ensure:

- Clear understanding of the role and the responsibilities of the Bureau
- Alignment of the term of the Executive Board and Bureau membership by holding the elections in January. The new Bureau Members elected in January would also have enough time to prepare for the Board's annual session
- Bureau membership term is long enough for the new Bureau members to understand the role and execute optimally. The Board can agree on ways of working for the Bureau, including the appointment of convenors for two years instead of one
- All lists employ a harmonized approach to information dissemination and input collection by:
 - Drafting the Terms of Reference of the list convenors and their ways of working
 - Allocating an administrative support officer from the Executive Board Secretariat to each electoral list. This additional administrative support would encourage more Member States to become list convenors

13. Design an induction session and a handbook for Executive Board Bureau members focusing on their roles, responsibilities, and ways of working.

14. For the implementation of the governance review recommendations a workplan should be developed for the following next steps:

- Presentation of the report and the key findings at the Executive Board Bureau meeting in June 2023
- Informal briefing for the Board Members before the June 2023 Board session
- Presenting the report and getting feedback from the Executive Board and WFP Leadership
- Prioritization of recommended actions and development of a timeline for their implementation
- Informal consultation with the Executive Board to get feedback on the draft implementation plan before the November 2023 Board session
- Board approval of the report and implementation plan
- Planning for change management and transition to the new ways of working in 2024–2026