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PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Hundred and Thirty-third Session

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Update on the selection process of the Director of Evaluation

Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The mandate of the former incumbent of Director of FAO Office of Evaluation ended on 31 January 2022.
- In line with the process for appointment of the Director of Evaluation set out in the Basic Texts, in particular paragraph 42 of the Charter for the FAO Office of Evaluation, a competitive procedure applies for appointment of the Director of Evaluation. A panel, consisting of representatives of the Director-General and the Programme Committee, as well as evaluation specialists from other UN agencies reviewed the terms of reference and statement of qualification for the post. Based on this review, a vacancy announcement was prepared, issued widely and a list of qualified candidates for interview was compiled. The panel interviewed these candidates and made a final recommendation regarding candidates appropriate for appointment by the Director-General.
- The Director-General is submitting to the Programme Committee a *Curriculum Vitae* of the selected candidate for the position of Director of FAO's Office of Evaluation, Ms Clemencia Cosentino, for information.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

- The Programme Committee is invited to take note of the document.

1. The process for appointment of the Director of Evaluation is set out in paragraph 42 of the Charter for the FAO Office of Evaluation, in Volume II, Section H of the Basic Texts (2017 edition), which provides that

“A competitive procedure applies for appointment of the Director of Evaluation. A panel, consisting of representatives of the Director-General and the Programme Committee, as well as evaluation specialists from other UN agencies will review the terms of reference and statement of qualifications for the post. Based on the review, a vacancy announcement will be prepared, issued widely and a list of qualified candidates for interview compiled. The panel will then review these candidates and make a final recommendation regarding candidates appropriate for appointment by the Director-General”.

2. In view of the end of the tenure of the Director of Evaluation on 31 January 2022, in July 2021, the Organization initiated the process for selection and appointment of the next Director of Evaluation.

3. At its 131st (Special) Session convened on 29 July 2021, the Programme Committee was presented with a high-level roadmap for the appointment process and agreed, in line with the Charter for the FAO Office of Evaluation, to nominate two representatives of the Committee to the panel as follows:

- i. Her Excellency (Ms) Yael Rubinstein (Chairperson); and
- ii. His Excellency (Mr) Carlos Bernardo Cherniak (Vice-Chairperson).¹

4. The panel was chaired by the FAO Legal Counsel. In addition to the representatives of the Programme Committee, the panel comprised the Director of Office of Strategy, Programme and Budget (OSP), and, as evaluation specialists, the Director of Evaluation of the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Director of the Independent Office of Evaluation of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

5. Following a review of the terms of reference and statement of qualifications by the panel, the Organization issued a vacancy announcement for the position of Director of Office of Evaluation with the deadline for applications set for 27 October 2021. A total of 109 applications were received.

6. In identifying the candidates for interview, the panel took into account the need for the candidates to have high-level and progressively responsible professional experience in evaluation. Consequently, emphasis was placed on (i) academic qualifications; (ii) executive level experience in a complex evaluation function; (iii) experience in a large organization with the use of evaluation and management techniques and experience in evaluation in diverse humanitarian and development contexts; and (iv) familiarity with the UN system or similar international institutions.

7. Twelve candidates were selected for interview by the panel. The interviews were held over the period 6 to 17 December 2021.

8. Taking into consideration recommendations in the Interview Panel Report, on 18 January 2022, the Director-General selected Ms Clemencia Cosentino (Curriculum Vitae attached) for the position of FAO Director of Office of Evaluation.

¹ CL 168/19.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: Ms Clemencia Cosentino

Languages: Spanish and English

OVERVIEW

Clemencia Cosentino is the Chief Evaluation Officer of the United States National Science Foundation (NSF). Born and raised in Argentina, she completed her university studies in the United States of America, where she has spent her professional career. With technical and content expertise developed through more than 25 years of professional experience, she has conducted influential research and evaluations to support programmatic decisions and strategic planning. At NSF, she leads planning activities for evidence-building, research studies and evaluations of programs and policies, and efforts to enhance capacity to generate actionable evidence through improved data quality and advanced methodologies and technology. Prior to joining NSF, she was Senior Fellow and Director of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Research at Mathematica and the Director of the Program for Evaluation and Equity Research of the Urban Institute. Her work centered on program evaluations and served to enhance knowledge about program impacts and effective practices; address implementation barriers; generate formative feedback (for improvements); and reassess grantee- and grantor-led monitoring and evaluation activities. Her studies have included, and often taken her to work with local partners in, countries in the Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia. She has been invited by foundations, international organizations, professional societies, and universities to give lectures and offer workshops on monitoring and evaluation—including UNICEF, the United States National Academy of Sciences, and Harvard University. She is the recipient of multiple honors and awards—from her university years (Phi Beta Kappa, summa cum laude) to the recent, inaugural “Excellence in Program Evaluation” award from the United States White House (2021).

EDUCATION

2010: Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology from Princeton University

2000: Master of Science in Sociology from Princeton University

1993: Bachelor of Arts in History, International Studies and Economics from Washington University in St. Louis

CAREER DETAILS

- 2019 – to date National Science Foundation (NSF), Virginia, USA
- Chief Evaluation Officer and Assessment Capability Section Head
- As Chief, responsible for providing leadership, technical guidance and strategic management of evaluation and other evidence-building efforts. Work includes:
- Serving in executive working groups, such as the Agency Equity Team, and responding to legislation, such as the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act.
 - Representing the Agency externally, such as in the G7 Working Group on Research Assessment and the White House Office of Management and Budget Council of Evaluation Officer.
 - Transitioning the Agency-wide evaluation unit in support of Agency strategic goals, which included developing an evaluation policy, annual evaluation plans, learning agendas, and an assessment of data maturity and capacity to build evidence.
- 2010 – October 2019 Mathematica, Washington D.C., USA
- Director, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Research and Senior Fellow
- As Director STEM, responsible for providing intellectual leadership, technical/methodological guidance, and strategic management of evaluations across divisions. This included:
- Developing annual strategy for work in STEM to drive decisions regarding proposals, staff professional development, recruitment and partnerships.
 - Overseeing projects and staff working on projects supported by government agencies and private foundations, funder relations, and risk management.
 - Developing research designs, conducting quality assurance, and ensuring STEM evaluations were informed by up-to-date research.

1994 – 2000, 2002 – 2010

Program for Evaluation and
Equity Research (PEER),
Education Policy Center

Urban Institute, Washington D.C., USA

Began evaluation career as a *Research Assistant*, continued through graduate studies as a *Consultant*, and later as *Research Associate*, *Senior Research Associate*, and ultimately *Director*.

- Initially responsible for performing research (such as literature reviews, statistical programming, and data collections) and later for designing, and leading teams of researchers conducting, impact and implementation evaluations and other research studies.