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FINANCE COMMITTEE

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Assessment of Recruitment Process

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The document "Assessment of Recruitment Process" highlights the findings from their review by an external contractor of FAO's recruitment process and the gaps and bottlenecks identified in the recruitment process.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

- The Committee is invited to review the document and provide its guidance as it deems appropriate.

Draft Advice

The Committee:

- **noted Management's work with an external contractor to identify gaps and bottlenecks in the recruitment process; and**
- **acknowledged the recommendations arising from the review and encouraged Management to continue to take proactive actions to address the issues highlighted.**

Background

1. In January 2024, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) engaged an external contractor, "Deloitte", to conduct a Capacity Readiness Assessment (CRA), in order to understand the current ("As-Is") state of the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) environment (understood as processes, policies, people and technology) as well as the future ("To-Be") state.

2. The study used an approach to:

   i. define a "value impact framework" which modelled FAO's growth in different areas of its operations in three phases: linear, exponential, and [on the verge of] saturation. Challenges and target improvements were segmented, accordingly, into three associated categories: operational efficiency, operational risk and reputational risk;

   ii. leverage findings of previous studies and complement them with "voice of the field" and "voice of headquarters" interviews, listing and structuring 'As-Is' challenges and their importance within the Value Impact Framework; and

   iii. recommend 'To-Be' changes in FAO's functional models, together with Decentralized Offices and HQ Business Process Owners (BPO), using Design Thinking techniques and in line with the Value Impact Framework.

HR Process Review

3. In the specific area of HR, the Deloitte assessment noted that the Human Resources function is essential for FAO's mission to foster a people-centred strategy that promotes integrity, innovation, collaboration, and excellence. This aligns with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goals. FAO has experienced exponential growth in its programme and budget in recent years, mostly driven by extrabudgetary (EB) contributions. As a knowledge-based organization, this growth in budget and delivery requires greater investment and support in human resources management at FAO.

4. In order to better support the strategic goals of the Organization, it is necessary to enhance efficiency and reduce transaction costs by simplifying HR processes and increasing technology and automation.

Focus on Recruitment

5. The Deloitte assessment found that recruitment processes are overly lengthy; the current time to recruit averages 200 days, which exceeds the target KPI of 120 days. The vacancy rate has stagnated as a result, hovering between 22-23 percent over the past two years.

6. Deloitte also identified key bottlenecks in the recruitment process, consisting of (1) the time taken by hiring managers to prepare the short-list of candidates for further assessment and (2) the time needed to confirm panel member availability and schedule the interview panel.

7. In addition, the assessment highlighted integration issues between Taleo and GRMS, which hamper efforts to extract real-time information, requiring manual efforts to extract data and create related recruitment dashboards. Moreover, current workforce planning and skills management is more focused on compliance than on strategy and planning, reducing flexibility and effectiveness in responding to organizational changes. These challenges highlight the need for the ongoing improvements in HR strategies and policy frameworks initiated in 2024 to be pursued and reinforced further.

8. Three key points for action emerged from the 'As-Is' phase assessment of the CRA with regard to Human Resources and the recruitment process. These three key points highlight the need for FAO to adapt and evolve its HR practices to effectively meet challenges, emphasizing the critical role of strategic HR management in achieving the Organization's mission, and provide key guidelines for enhancing HR effectiveness. The three areas of focus are as follows:

i. Streamline Recruitment processes to meet the KPI target of reducing the recruitment time from the current level of 200 days on average to 120 target days by:

- planning in advance, and where possible running activities in parallel, leveraging a forward-looking and proactive approach;
- consolidating interview administrative tasks, assessment/testing support and selection report writing to a dedicated group and applying agreed Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and Operational Level Agreements (OLAs);
- evaluating the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for pre-screening and supporting testing development, assessment and evaluation;
- implementing training for non-HR staff involved in the selection process (hiring manager on screening and panel members on interview techniques/bias awareness, etc.);
- increasing automated solutions for workflow approval, reminders and follow-up in the applicant tracking system (within Taleo or any future replacement system); and
- implementing an end-to-end Core Talent Management System (TMS) covering the entire employee life cycle (incl. Reporting), for example a single integrated cloud based, mobile applications enabled Solution to replace Taleo for Recruitment and Oracle EBS (GRMS) for On-boarding and other ad-hoc tools for tracking progress and monitoring timelines.

ii. Improve the "operational/administrative machine" (automation, connected Ps – policy, process, people, platform and planning – and end-to-end business-oriented reporting) and address cross-cutting issues affecting various processes and stakeholders by:

- depending on the outcome of the ERP review, leveraging a new HR system to integrate policy, process, platform, people and planning. Alternatively, identify best in class solutions and implement these to meet HR system and tool requirements;
- in the meantime, identifying and implementing quick wins, such as resolving known system bugs and operational issues, through the CSI ERP maintenance team, which could also bring immediate benefits.

iii. Establish an Integrated and Skills-Based Human Capital Management framework by:

- defining the shape and the logic of a comprehensive skills framework to be used throughout the end-to-end planning and talent management lifecycle (from "Hire-to-Separate" – H2S);
- developing a Strategic Workforce Planning and Talent Management end-to-end model, underpinned by a skills & talent management framework, including the necessary tools, e.g. an internal talent marketplace; and
- identifying impacts on the HR processes, models, and tools to update the approach to Strategic Workforce Planning and Talent Management.