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AFRICAN INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING
INSTITUT AFRICAIN DE DEVELOPPEMENT ECONOMIQUE ET DE PLANIFICATION



57th Session of IDEP Governing Council

NOTE ON ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

June 25, 2019 Dakar
Sénégal

1. The following note serves to provide an update to members of the Council on key administrative developments during the reporting period.
2. As captured in Article III of its statute, IDEP, a subsidiary of the ECA and an entity of the United Nations Secretariat, is subject to the financial and staff regulations and rules, and any administrative issuances of the United Nations.
3. In the past decade, a number of key administrative decisions have been taken by the United Nations. Of particular note are the decisions to **replace** the United Nations System Accounting Standards (UNSAS) and adopt the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), and the subsequent implementation of an enterprise resource planning tool in UMOJA. IPSAS and UMOJA are compulsory for all organs of the United Nations, IDEP included. IDEP has thus embarked on the implementation of IPSAS and UMOJA as detailed below:

INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTING STANDARDS (IPSAS) ADOPTION

4. The International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) are a set of accounting rules and guidelines issued by the IPSAS Board for use by Public Sector entities in preparing financial statements. They are modeled after the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), which are accruals-based. The United Nations adopted IPSAS in order to: provide better understanding of its financial performance: to improve comparability with other similar public sector entities: improve decision making; to improve resource allocation; improve financial information to support governance; and to improve transparency and accountability amongst other benefits.
5. IDEP, as a subsidiary of the ECA and an organ of the UN Secretariat, must adopt IPSAS as a prerequisite for UMOJA implementation besides the advantages of IPSAS cited above. A conversion plan to guide the adoption was put in place in August 2018.
6. The said plan, which included training for staff in the Administration Division, has been fully implemented and members are invited to note that IDEP produced its first set of IPSAS-compliant financial statements for the year 2018 (see note 5.3). These financial statements will be consolidated into the UN Volume I financial statements which are the set of consolidated financial statements for all entities of the United Nations Secretariat.

7. Historically and as an exception, IDEP has been preparing UNSAS-based financial statements which have been audited by external auditors who further presented the annual financial statements to the Board for approval. However, the UN Regulations and Rules require that accounts of UN entities be audited by the Board of Auditors of the United Nations which is required to report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly through the Advisory Committee of Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). The Board of Auditors (BOA) have thus audited the 2018 financial statements of IDEP. No significant finding was made.
8. In this light, members are invited to note, officially consider and adopt the following changes and associated implications that are in compliance with UN Regulations and Rules:
 - 8.1 IDEP shall prepare financial statements in compliance with IPSAS going forward.
 - 8.2 IDEP shall no longer seek the auditing services of external auditors, but instead shall be audited annually within the first quarter of each year by the BOA.
 - 8.3 IDEP's financial statements shall be consolidated into the Volume I financial statements for all UN Secretariat entities. This consolidated report shall be made available to members of the Council for review and noting once cleared by the General Assembly and as soon as available to IDEP.
 - 8.4 IDEP shall continue to prepare its annual report on Financial Performance based on the BOA-audited financial statements. This report shall be annually submitted to the Council alongside the financial statements.

IMPLEMENTATION OF UMOJA ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING TOOL

9. As part of its major operational reforms aimed at business transformation, the United Nations Secretariat evaluated a number of tools and settled on the acquisition and implementation of UMOJA, a version of SAP customized to meet the operating requirements of the UN Secretariat. The implementation of UMOJA is expected to significantly improve financial and administrative operations, and programme delivery thereby improving the organization's overall effectiveness with the added result of cost reduction.

10. Entities of the United Nations Secretariat, including the ECA, are required to operate within UMOJA which in addition to the benefits indicated above helps improve their operational visibility and compliance with regulations and rules.
11. IDEP was scheduled to “Go-live” as part of “Phase I” in November 2015, and the conversion processes had kicked off. However, due to its unique autonomous nature, the process was halted in order to examine how best to bring IDEP in without compromising its operational autonomy. Management is pleased to inform the members that this process was recently finalised and a decision to bring in IDEP as an autonomous trust fund was made in October 2018. The process was launched in 2019 following the finalisation of the conversion from UNSAS to IPSAS.
12. A project implementation plan has almost been finalised in conjunction with the ECA Finance team and the UMOJA team in New York as at the reporting time. This plan covers all aspects including staff training, both online and onsite. UMOJA “Go-live” for IDEP is expected to be in August 2019.
13. UMOJA is expected to significantly improve operational efficiency in the following areas: records management, payment mechanisms, financial management, supplier relationship management, assets (current, non-current) management, human resources management, travel management, procurement, and accounting. Most importantly, it will allow IDEP to utilise a harmonised operating structure in use by all other entities of the Secretariat and hence allow for interoperability. In addition, UMOJA is web-based and thus accessible at all times as long as staff are connected to the internet.
14. Other than the challenges associated with change, some of which management will address with a robust training plan as well as scheduled hands-on support from the ECA, no major disruptions and inconveniences to current operations are expected during the implementation, which will be run in parallel until the chosen “Go-live” date. In actual fact, the implementation of UMOJA ERP will address a significant number of the business processes that IDEP plans to review within its 2019-2023 strategic plan as they are already comprehensively addressed in it.
15. Members are invited to note this development. Updates will be provided at the next session of the Council.

UN AGENCIES IN SENEGAL MOVING TO THE UN HOUSE IN DIAMNDIAO SENEGAL BY 2020

16. The Government of Senegal hosts as many as 32 agencies of the United Nations.

17. Under its collective development programme, the Government of Senegal is developing a new city in a place called Diamniadio, 30KM away from Dakar and close to the new airport (Blaise Diagne International Airport).
18. One of the flagstone projects the Government is undertaking is the construction of the UN House which is set to be the office premises for all the UN entities currently in Dakar Senegal. Government launched consultative processes with the UN in Senegal since 2015 to sensitise all institutions and staff about the project and seek the UN's views and participation in the project. Studies on space requirements have been undertaken and several meetings of representatives of each UN agency and the project's Architects have taken place to closely define, select, and affirm space requirements. Since then, local committees have been established to focus on various areas of critical impact to staff such as human resources, common services, host-country agreement, security and ICT.
19. In accordance with the decree by the Government, accepted by all UN agencies after consultations, once the premises are ready, all UN offices are expected to move to Diamniadio. The Government will henceforth cease to provide free office spaces to all UN agencies in 2020.
20. The IDEP management has been following these developments quite closely and has assured the following:
 - 20.1 That sufficient office space is made available to IDEP for its current staffing level with enough extra room for expected growth in staffing levels within the next five (5) years.
 - 20.2 That library space is provided to IDEP for its valuable collection of reading materials.
 - 20.3 That two fully-equipped dedicated amphitheatres are made available to IDEP for its training activities.
 - 20.4 That a computer lab is made available to IDEP on a sharing basis to accommodate some of its more technical courses requiring computer simulations.
 - 20.5 That it is represented in all critical groups to keep abreast of developments and raise concerns and suggestions as necessary.
 - 20.6 That it has undertaken a cost-benefit analysis and has found that operational costs will drop by as much as 65% once in the common services where costs will be shared with other agencies.

20.7 That it is keeping abreast of amenities that are key to decision-making for staff such as hospitals and schools in the vicinity of the office premises and informing staff accordingly on an ongoing basis.

21. Members of the Council are invited to note this development. Management will provide updates on developments to the Council in subsequent sessions until the project is completed.

KEY STAFFING CHANGES

22. Following the restructuring of the ECA, IDEP has been allocated a P5 position on the Regional Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC) to support its quest to build its Knowledge Management and Digital Learning offerings. Subsequently, Mr. Thierry Amoussougbo, former Senior Programme Officer in the African Climate Policy Centre of the ECA, who is an expert in ICT, knowledge management and digital learning joined IDEP in November 2018 to boost capacity in these domains. Mr. Amoussougbo has over 27 years' experience working in the UN System. He is an electrical engineer by profession.

23. The capacity of Training and Research Division was boosted in October 2018 following the joining of Mr. Mamadou Cisse as Training Officer reporting to the Head of Training and Research. Dr. Cisse is an economist with a PhD in Statistical Probabilities and has 18 years working experience from the academic world.

STAFF TRAINING

24. All staff members of the Administration Division have received digital and hands-on training on IPSAS.

25. In support of the drive in the knowledge management and digital learning domains, IDEP staff have received the following training from the ECA:

- Archives and Records Management System (all staff)
- Integrated Library Systems (Knowledge Management Staff)
- Collaboration Platforms (Alfresco & CoPs) – (Knowledge Management Staff)

26. Three staff members from the Training and Research Division benefited from an ECA retooling course on "Writing Skills".