

TENNIS

by Adrianna Gabrielli

The IAGs are always a wonderful occasion to participate in a sport you love, meet people from other UN agencies, get to know better the people from your own agency and generally – have fun! This year's Games held in Malaga were no exception! I was honoured after many years of participating in the Games to be chosen to bear the FAO flag during our 'Olympic' entrance into the hall at the Inauguration Ceremony. It was an emotional event and it was amazing to see not only the participants from large agencies in Europe but those who had come from far afield, Afghanistan, Kenya, South Sudan. Although there were a few organizational problems regarding the tennis tournament, the captains worked out a solution in a friendly manner and in spite of rain and wind, followed by the sun we were expecting, we managed to enjoy an exciting tournament. As we were eight teams, we played a round robin tournament (two groups of four) which meant we had three matches each to start off. FAO won one and lost two – however, due to the high average of games won against games lost, we managed to finish second in our group. The FAO tennis team gained third position which means we are now seeded for next year's draw. As FAO lacked some of the team components, we were able to borrow players from other agencies. This turned out to be really inspiring as we got to know non-FAO tennis players and we all fitted in well together and the spirit of our team was wonderful. We were a very compact team and dialogued at all times to ensure we chose the best strategy to get us the points we needed – our strategy worked well. I have been going to the Games for many years and hope to go to many more – they are not to be missed! I wish to add here some comments (one from a non-FAO staff member) which will help you to realise the reason we participate and to encourage you to participate next time: "after many years of not going to the games, I am extremely happy I went this year and it was great getting to know new people"; "I would like to thank you all for the amazing experience, especially that these were my first IAGs. I had a wonderful time, met great people and really enjoyed the whole event"; "It was my pleasure meeting you all. Great team." So, if you are a tennis player – or a 'was' tennis player, please dust down your rackets and come and join us in friendly games throughout the year and hopefully in the IAGs next year (which by the way, will be organized by IAEA and held in Austria).

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