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Enabling poor rural people
to overcome poverty

Report of the Chairperson on the sixty-fifth session of the Evaluation Committee

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For: Review

Report of the Chairperson on the sixty-fifth session of the Evaluation Committee

1. This report covers the deliberations of the Evaluation Committee during its sixty-fifth session held on 25 and 26 November 2010. The six agenda items for discussion were: (i) the minutes of the Evaluation Committee sixty-fourth session; (ii) the 2010 Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (ARRI); (iii) the corporate-level evaluation on IFAD's performance with regard to gender equality and women's empowerment; (iv) the provisional agenda of the Evaluation Committee for 2011; (v) the progress report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Peer Review of IFAD's Office of Evaluation and Evaluation Function; and (vi) the report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE). The Evaluation Committee approved the proposal made by IFAD Management at the beginning of the session not to discuss the item on IFAD's Engagement with Middle-Income Countries, which will instead be included in the agenda for the planned Evaluation Committee session of 25 February 2011.
2. All Committee members attended the session, with Egypt in the Chair, Dr Essam Othman Fayed, who has been designated by the Government of Egypt to replace Dr Abdel Aziz Mohamed Hosni. The Committee welcomed Mr Kent Vachon who participated on behalf of Ms Adair Heuchan from Canada. The Committee also welcomed Mr Diego Simancas from Mexico, which has replaced Brazil as a member of the Committee.
3. The Committee was joined by IFAD's Associate Vice-President, Programmes, Programme Management Department (PMD); the Chief Development Strategist of IFAD; the Director of the Office of Evaluation (IOE); the Secretary of IFAD; the Director of the Strategic Planning Division and other IFAD staff. Mr Michael Flint and Ms Rieky Stuart, IOE consultants, also joined the session for the items respectively on the ARRI and the corporate-level evaluation on gender equality and women's empowerment.
4. As decided by the Committee, this report does not cover a summary of the discussion on the Peer Review, for which a separate Chairperson's report has been produced.
5. **Draft minutes of the 64th Session of the Evaluation Committee.** The Committee discussed document EC 2010/65/W.P.2 which contains the minutes of the sixty-fourth session of the Evaluation Committee for approval by members. Commenting on para 9, it was decided to remove the word "more" on points (i) and (iv). With this change, the Committee approved the Minutes of its sixty-fourth session.
6. **2010 Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (ARRI).** The Evaluation Committee discussed the eighth ARRI prepared by IOE for its consideration. The Committee also had the opportunity to discuss the written IFAD Management Response to the document.
7. The Committee welcomed this year's ARRI, including the new features introduced in the document, in particular, the higher focus on the "why" factor, and the introduction of the chapter on non-lending activity, as well as the initial analysis on efficiency. Overall, members supported the recommendations of the ARRI.
8. Members expressed concerns on the performance of IFAD-funded projects in some evaluation criteria, such as efficiency, natural resource management and environment, and sustainability. They underlined the need for continued efforts to improve performance in these areas.
9. The Committee noted that efficiency (including institutional efficiency) is a major challenge and underlined that the issues in the ARRI chapter on efficiency dealt

more with challenges rather than solutions for improving performance in this area. The Committee look forward to the corporate level evaluation on efficiency, which can provide deeper insights and find solutions in order to enhance the Fund's performance in this important area. Members also underlined that a "one size fits all" approach may not be appropriate, and there is a need to focus on the context in addressing this issue.

10. The Committee underlined that performance of government is critical for improving project performance. In this regard, they encouraged IFAD to develop wider partnership with other agencies to develop government capacity, given that IFAD has limited country presence that can constrain its capacity building efforts. The Committee also highlighted that IFAD Management needs to take a more proactive approach in supporting governments in terms of capacity building, given that IFAD is widely considered a well respected partner by the governments.
11. Members noted that performance in sub-Saharan Africa is a cause for concern, and invited the Management to address this in a concerted manner. They also noted that engagement with the private sector has been insufficient, and noted that they will have a chance to discuss the topic more widely in the context of the corporate level evaluation on private sector early next year.
12. The Committee discussed the points raised by ARRI related to the Results Measurement Framework, **and noted that further discussion on this topic will be undertaken in the Board.**
13. **Corporate-level evaluation on IFAD's performance with regard to gender equality and women's empowerment.** The Evaluation Committee discussed the Corporate-level evaluation on IFAD's performance with regard to gender equality and women's empowerment undertaken by IOE. The Committee also had the opportunity to discuss the written IFAD Management Response to the document prior to the Executive Board's consideration of the evaluation in December 2010.
14. The Committee welcomed the evaluation. The report was found to be comprehensive, well-written and cover important operational and organizational aspects of gender equality and women's empowerment.
15. The Committee supported the findings and recommendations of the evaluation and would recommend to the Board the development of an evidence-based policy on gender. This policy document should be developed based on an IFAD-wide consultation to ensure ownership, including during implementation.
16. Concerning the operational aspects, the members noted the importance of measuring the level of investments and administrative budgets, as well as tracking and reporting results on gender equality and women's empowerment.
17. The Committee acknowledged that IFAD is doing better than its peers but also took note that performance is only moderately satisfactory. In this regard, it was noted that IFAD should take advantage of the experiences of bilateral agencies and other development partners on gender equality and women's empowerment.
18. Concerning organizational aspect, the Committee found culture change to be important and requested IFAD Management to treat the related areas in the ongoing IFAD human resources reform as a priority.
19. Members encouraged IFAD to build on the positive momentum of this evaluation, including the development of a system to track results on gender equality from quality assurance to evaluation, human resources development and sensitization gender-specific training. On the latter, the Committee emphasized the need to allocate the financial resources in a timely fashion to be able to undertake this activity at the beginning of next year. This requires Management to adopt a holistic approach and to plan from the start.

20. The Committee welcomed the proposal on choosing gender as a big bet for its corporate innovation agenda.
21. The Committee welcomed the organization of a stakeholder workshop in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in order to discuss the findings and recommendations of the evaluation. The Committee also recommended the presentation of the evaluation report together with the Management Response at the forthcoming session of the 9th Replenishment of IFAD in order to engage a wider group of IFAD member states.
22. Members requested that in the future the terms of reference, in form of the evaluation approach paper of corporate level evaluations need to be presented to the Committee for review. The approach paper should also be attached to the final evaluation report as an annex. In this regard, the approach paper of the forthcoming corporate level evaluation on efficiency will be discussed at the Committee session planned in February 2011.
23. **Provisional agenda of the Evaluation Committee for 2011.** The Committee discussed its proposed provisional agenda for 2011. As mentioned above, Committee members noted that the approach paper of the forthcoming corporate level evaluation on efficiency will be discussed at the Committee session in February 2011 as well as the MICs document. These documents will, therefore, be added to the related session programme.
24. Members questioned the validity of discussing in the course of the year two evaluations undertaken in Ghana and requested IOE to propose an alternative project evaluation for the July 2011 session. Based on IOE's proposal, the Committee decided to discuss the Dom Helder project evaluation undertaken by IOE in Brazil, in its July 2011 session.
25. The Committee reiterated the importance for conducting country visits and requested a proposal from the Management and IOE for the countries. They highlighted the importance of visiting closed projects evaluated by IOE as well as ongoing operations. The proposal will be submitted to the February session of the Committee in 2011.
26. Concerning the proposed dates for the July 2011 session, the Committee decided to advance the session by one day, to be therefore held on 12-13 July 2011.
27. Members decided to discuss the Direct Supervision and Implementation Support synthesis report at its October session in 2011.
28. **The Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE).** The Committee discussed and welcomed the RIDE, together with the comments provided by IOE thereon, prior to its consideration by the Executive Board in December 2010.
29. Members noted that the data on performance of IFAD-funded projects presented in this year's RIDE are broadly similar to data in the 2010 ARRI.
30. The Committee underlined the importance of the issue of efficiency, both at the project level and with regard to IFAD's institutional efficiency. They concurred with the comments of IOE for the Management to concentrate in the future in improving efficiency, as it has been consistently one of the weakest evaluation criteria.
31. The Committee highlighted the need to improve access to markets in order to enhance smallholder incomes, which is one aspect that needs to be considered in discussions related to the efficiency of IFAD-funded operations.
32. Moreover, the Committee underlined the importance of implementing the recommendations contained in paragraphs 10 and 11 in the IOE comments, which include, among other issues, the need to add in the RIDE an additional section identifying the main issues and priorities for actions to address areas of weak performance.

33. Members also highlighted that sustainability of projects still remains weak, which the Fund should continue to devote concerted attention to in the future.
34. The Committee was appraised of the high level of the staff costs in IFAD's total administrative cost and the proposal Management has submitted with respect to strategic workforce planning in the 2011 POWB document for the consideration of the December 2010 EB.
35. **IFAD's engagement with Middle Income Countries.** The Committee was to discuss the MIC document at its sixty-fifth session. However, following the explanation provided by the Chief Development Strategist on the first day of the session at the time of the adoption of the agenda for the sixty-fifth session, the Committee agreed to defer the discussion of the MIC document to the session in February 2011.
36. **Other business.** There were no topics raised for discussion under the other business agenda item.