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Investing in rural people

## **Report on the 2014 country visit of the IFAD Executive Board**

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**For: Review**

## Report on the 2014 country visit of the IFAD Executive Board

1. **Summary.** IFAD staff worked tirelessly to execute an ambitious and varied programme in the United Republic of Tanzania from 12 to 16 May 2014. Despite some hiccups and missed opportunities due to weather conditions, the team succeeded in experiencing what was an instructive, inspiring and memorable field trip. Highlights included meetings with the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, the President of Zanzibar, round-table discussions with several ministers from the United Republic of Tanzania (including agriculture, food security and cooperatives; industry and trade; investment and empowerment; and livestock and fisheries development) and the Minister for Agriculture and Natural Resources of Zanzibar. Field visits to Zanzibar and the Manyara Region allowed Board members to interact with beneficiaries from local communities.
2. **Overview of the visit.** On the first day, Board members visited the headquarters of the East African Community in Arusha. There, Board members learned about regional trade opportunities for the rural sector and about the East African Community's plans to establish a common market within its borders. The afternoon visit to a new border post with Kenya clearly showed the gap between the crucial goal for the governments in the regions to improve and facilitate border trade and the appropriate implementation measures. At the time of the visit, Board members observed very little economic activity in the area.
3. During the visit to Katikati village in Kiteto District, Board members missed the scheduled opportunity to interact with local civil-society, private-sector and other organizations. The weather did not permit the planes to land close to Katikati village and the delegation had to spend a good deal of the day on the road. On the positive side, road travel gave Board members a vivid sense of the challenges that face the rural population in this area as well as the actors involved in rural development and agriculture. It took several hours to reach the village by jeep on the dirt roads – which we were told were in quite good condition as there had been no rain for a few days. We could see very few signs of economic activity along the way, apart from vast sunflower and maize fields – the owners of which are settled farmers that plant on the land of the pastoralists when they move on. We heard of conflicts over land and water that occur when the pastoralists return. We also observed early signs of land erosion (gullies) because the more intensive use of land (pastoralism and farming) with the water from new wells no longer seems to be sustainable. This presents an additional challenge for IFAD and the Government to develop concepts for sustainable rural development in the area.
4. Upon arrival in the village, Board members were received with great fanfare. Time constraints (we had to return to the aeroplanes before sunset) left us with very little time for a meaningful exchange with the villagers (Masai pastoralists). The Executive Board members did not manage to learn much about the actual project supported by IFAD from the villagers, but we got a sense of their great appreciation for it.
5. After this field trip, the Executive Board members had the opportunity to exchange views with the Tanzanian Ministers for Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives; Livestock and Fisheries Development; and Industry and Trade; Investment and Empowerment; and the Minister for Agriculture and Natural Resources of Zanzibar; as well as high officials from the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. During this exchange, Board members learned about the country's plans to bring greater focus to its development interventions. Instead of a countrywide approach, the Government now targets resources at priority sectors and trade corridors. Agriculture remains a top priority. Challenges that were emphasized are poor infrastructure; conflicts between pastoralists and crop farmers; access to productivity-enhancing technology; unpredictable weather patterns; access to

markets, market information and credit; a lack of qualified extension service officers; and the need to make agriculture attractive to youth. Significant investments are required to overcome these challenges. The ministers and officials present indicated that IFAD's assistance is needed to link smallholders – with a strong emphasis on women – to the Government's development programmes to prevent them from being left behind.

6. The field visit to Zanzibar gave Board members an insight into the benefits of farmers' field schools, which are part of the Government's Agricultural Sector Development Programme and Agricultural Service Support Programme, both of which are implemented with IFAD's support. In these operations, IFAD directly benefits from close collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) which developed concepts and gained substantial experience in supporting farmers' field schools that enable students to increase their productivity. The students share the knowledge they gain with others, are better organized and provide mutual support. IFAD ensures that these achievements are built on and that the groups become better equipped to build and grow profitable small businesses, creating a virtuous cycle of increased investment and employment in rural areas, as well as the image of agriculture as a business rather than a subsistence activity, making it more attractive to young people.
7. A round-table discussion about the President's Big Results Now (BRN) scheme illustrated the ambitious plans of the Government to develop the country in a more gradual and focused way. Agriculture remains a top priority in this scheme. The focus is on maize, sugar cane and rice, for which the Government has set ambitious production targets. Implementation will rely heavily on complex public-private partnerships. Smallholders in peripheral areas will be linked to nucleus farms so that they will not be left behind. The BRN scheme is an ambitious initiative backed by the President and led by an energetic and high-calibre team working in the President's Delivery Bureau. In this context IFAD is an advocate for smallholders, ensuring that they benefit from the gains of the BRN, and are shielded from possible negative externalities (e.g. loss of land, increased competition and a decline in investments in/attention to smallholder agriculture).
8. A meeting with country representatives of the World Food Programme (WFP), FAO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) held in the IFAD country office (ICO) showed Board members how much practical sense close collaboration among the Rome-based agencies makes. Board members also learned that IFAD's office on the FAO premises is rather small and does not fully comply with United Nations security standards. In addition, the country office looks understaffed. Another issue is the insufficient authority delegated to the country director. For example, minor expenses still need approval from Rome. The Board members appreciate progress in decentralization in the United Republic of Tanzania, and feel that the next step should be a review of the delegated authority to the country programme manager and a look at adequate staffing of the country office.
9. **Conclusions.** The country is committed to rural poverty reduction and greatly values IFAD's role in this respect. This was evidenced by the extraordinary turnout in top leadership. IFAD plays an important role in the United Republic of Tanzania in ensuring that smallholders remain at the centre stage of rural poverty reduction. This role has become even more important with the momentum behind the BRN scheme, which will bring both opportunities and challenges to smallholder farmers in the United Republic of Tanzania.
10. Both the trip and the meeting held at the ICO showed that decentralization is an ambitious but necessary endeavour for IFAD. The next step to make decentralization even more effective should now be planned.
11. Field visits to remote areas should be planned with the expectation of setbacks occurring. Also, IFAD could communicate to local representatives that field visits would benefit from a more lowkey approach and greater emphasis on learning and dialogue.