



IFAD
INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
Executive Board – Sixty-Fifth Session
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REPORT ON THE COMMEMORATION
OF THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF IFAD

1. Further to the information provided in documents EB 97/62/R.34, EB 98/63/R.33 and GC 21/L.14, there follows a brief update on activities undertaken or to be undertaken by IFAD and its Member States during 1998 to commemorate the Fund's Twentieth Anniversary.
2. Earlier in the year, the Government of Bhutan informed the Fund of the establishment of an eight-member task force on activities to celebrate IFAD's Twentieth Anniversary in Bhutan. These included the issuance of a special postage stamp, a supplement on IFAD's work in the weekly national newspaper, commemorative awards to the best extension workers and the most outstanding farmer, and a number of events programmed for 17 October 1998 - IFAD Day.
3. Italy has issued a new ITL 500 coin to commemorate IFAD's Twentieth Anniversary. The coin is now in wide circulation in the Fund's host country.
4. The Government of the Kingdom of Sweden sponsored a Nordic/IFAD Seminar on Poverty Eradication in Rural Africa, held on 4 to 12 May 1998. Participants included President of IFAD and members of his staff, representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Finland, Norway and Sweden; representatives of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and the World Bank; senior representatives of development agencies; and leading academics. Drawing on work at the field and strategy-development levels, the seminar explored the possibility of eradicating poverty through smallholder agricultural development and discussed the framework needed to create opportunities. The following points emerged. The positive impact of liberalization on smallholder development was stressed, as were the special challenges involved. A positive investment flow (within development strategies that must be increasingly differentiated to reflect real-cost pricing of services and inputs) has an underlying comparative advantage for smallholders. However, the likelihood that this can form the basis of a sustainable increase in income and food security will greatly depend on increased social and economic power for the rural poor. Such empowerment must not be limited to participation in projects and programmes: on the contrary, it must be broadly conceived as control over resources and institutions that touch upon the everyday lives of the poor. Exploiting their economic opportunities will require that the fabric of farmer-controlled economic institutions be strengthened, not least to ensure equity in their relations with private-sector investors.



The same is true in the socio-political arena, where empowerment will depend on effective local-level organization, combined with legislative changes that pave the way for empowerment but do not guarantee it.

5. In the United States (Washington, DC) a full-day seminar, Partners for Prosperity; Public and Private Sector Collaboration in Combating Rural Poverty, was held on 4 June 1998. Keynote speeches were given by the President of IFAD and representatives of the United States Agency for International Development and the Rigoberta Menchu Foundation. Members of the United States Congress, the Department of Agriculture, and the State Department also participated in panel discussions. Representing private-sector interests were senior executives of such companies as Land O'Lakes, Monsanto and Cargill, who presented their organizations' corporate experiences and objectives concerning collaboration in rural development. In addition, speakers from The Philippines, South Africa, and United States-based non-governmental organizations (NGO) such as the Foundation for International Community Assistance and the Trickle-Up Program, shared their organizations' grass-roots perspectives on how partnerships can benefit rural initiatives. Working groups were organized for the purpose of holding in-depth discussions on prospects for building stronger public/private sector partnerships in each of the three seminar topics: promotion of microfinance, combating desertification, and ensuring access of the rural poor to productive resources such as land and water. Each group developed a set of concrete recommendations which, together with the report of the seminar, will be published through numerous outlets — NGO newsletters, private sector publications and the US Congressional Record — to assure maximum outreach. These recommendations will also form part of an IFAD policy paper on the engagement of the private sector in pursuing common objectives in sustainable rural development. The day after the seminar, an additional meeting was held with the working group of the Agro-Business Alliance. The meeting, hosted by the President of the Citizens' Network for Foreign Affairs and attended by senior private-sector representatives, allowed for exchanges on practical modalities for partnerships at the project level.

6. Following the 4 June 1998 seminar, three United States Senators sponsored a Senate staff briefing, with the participation of IFAD staff members, to highlight the importance both of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) and IFAD's selection as host agency to the Global Mechanism. Related events included a high-profile private-sector briefing on CCD hosted by the White House.

7. On 8-13 June 1998, the Dominican Republic hosted the second Workshop on Strengthening Gender Issues in IFAD's projects. The third workshop on the subject will be held in Saint Lucia in November 1998, and the fourth and final one in Chile in March 1999. This programme of workshops has been made possible by funds from the Japanese Government's grant for women-in-development activities.

8. A workshop on IFAD's Strategic Direction was held in Mussori, India, on 9 and 10 June 1998.

9. A workshop on IFAD's Experience in Poverty Alleviation was held in Nepal from 13 to 18 September 1998.

10. On 5 and 6 October 1998, a workshop was held in Indonesia on IFAD's Response to the Asian Crisis and its Impact on the Rural Poor. The workshop was attended by representatives of international organizations, governments, NGOs and academic institutions.



11. Between 2 and 17 October 1998, the Government of Benin organized a series of events to celebrate IFAD's Twentieth Anniversary. These included a documentary film, television programmes and radio broadcasts to rural areas on IFAD's activities in Benin.
12. The Government of Uganda organized a number of activities to mark IFAD's Twentieth Anniversary with the participation of the President of IFAD and members of his staff, the President and Prime Minister of Uganda, other Ministers and senior Ugandan officials, and the Programme Manager of the Belgian Survival Fund. The activities included the official launching of the IFAD-financed Vegetable Oil Development Project; presentation of certificates to womens' groups and adult functional literacy certificates; tree planting; visits to women's groups engaged in building culverts and to a demonstration farm on improved agricultural practices; and general celebrations on 17 October 1998 in honour of IFAD's Twentieth Anniversary and the International Day for Poverty Eradication.
13. Ghana will host a Workshop on Rural Microfinance from 9 to 13 November 1998.
14. Syria will host a Workshop on Participatory Management of Rangelands in the Near East North Africa Region, to be held in Damascus on 22-24 November 1998.
15. Egypt will host the Ninth Annual IFAD/NGO Consultation in Cairo on 13-16 December 1998. This will be the first IFAD/NGO Consultation to be held outside IFAD headquarters. While there, participants will have an opportunity to visit an IFAD project in Egypt.
16. The Executive Board is requested to note this further information on the celebration of IFAD's Twentieth Anniversary.