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**INTERIM REPORT ON THE GLOBAL CASSAVA DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**





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### Introduction

1. At its Sixty-Second Session in December 1997, the Executive Board approved a Technical Assistance Grant of USD 200 000 to partly finance activities under Phase I of the Action Research Programme related to the Global Cassava Development Strategy. In approving the grant, the Executive Board requested the President of IFAD to report on the outcome of the strategy and on the actual commitments made for the strategy.
2. An international forum of stakeholders was originally planned for the end of 1998 to formally endorse the strategy, on the assumption that the necessary preparatory studies and related consultations would have been completed by then. However, in response to the increasing number of governments and other partners interested in strategic planning for cassava development, and in order to ensure effective ownership by stakeholders, the participatory reviews and consultations at grassroots, national and regional levels have taken more time than expected.
3. This information note therefore constitutes an interim report on progress made in strategic planning for global cassava development, on the ongoing follow-up initiatives at field level, and on the next steps towards endorsement and implementation of the strategy.

### Background

4. The formulation of the Global Cassava Development Strategy was initiated at an international brainstorming meeting convened by IFAD in mid-1996. The meeting noted that cassava production is closely allied with, but not the cause of, farm household poverty in many parts of the world; poor households are marginalized and are often found in remote areas – the same areas where cassava performs well. This relationship suggests that development of market opportunities for cassava could increase household food security, especially for households facing resource constraints; and could contribute substantially to poverty alleviation.
5. In light of past experiences with isolated interventions, the meeting recognized the need to formulate an overall strategic plan based on identifying, on a demand-driven basis and in a systematic manner, the opportunities and constraints at each stage of the commodity development cycle; regional and national dimensions and priorities; and the bridges from research to extension, from production to consumption. The plan should also address technical and socio-economic issues related to farming systems, gender and environment.
6. Based on the shared view that cassava can not only contribute to the food security status of producing and consuming households but also stimulate rural industrial development and raise incomes, the proposed strategic planning has the following objectives:
  - identify the opportunities for private investments and public interventions to respond to market failures and to help ensure food security;
  - identify constraints in order to determine and prioritize a research agenda and define more cost-effective institutional mechanisms to help rationalize the allocation of public and private resources for research;
  - develop a framework for technical cooperation at international level in research and technology transfer that would reflect regional/national specificity and institutional comparative advantages; and



- set the scene for future debates on global issues, such as trade, that may affect cassava development.

### **The review and consultation process**

7. By virtue of its catalytic role in the formulation of the strategy, IFAD approved a grant of USD 200 000 in 1997 to finance thematic action-research on cross-cutting issues related to agro-processing and market expansion, and food security and gender, and to facilitate stakeholder consultations for defining regional priorities and identifying investment opportunities. Grant-financed activities are well under way, but the rate of disbursement has been affected by the pace of stakeholder mobilization and the time-consuming participatory process; hence the need to extend the closing date of action-research activities through 1999.

8. The reviews and consultations facilitated or (co-)financed by IFAD at international or regional levels have brought together and received support from stakeholders such as farmers' organizations, NGOs and the private sector; international development partners including, *inter alia*, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Bank, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), the United Kingdom National Research Institute (NRI), the International Cooperation Centre on Agrarian Research for Development/Promotion of Tropical Amyloids (CIRAD/PROAMYL-France), the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), and the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC); national and regional research institutes and their networks; and intergovernmental organizations of cassava-producing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

9. Strategic planning work capitalizes on a series of diagnostic studies, including three regional studies (Africa; Asia; and Latin America and the Caribbean) and country case studies (including, *inter alia*, Brazil, Colombia, Ghana, Nigeria, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, and Viet Nam). In addition, a number of thematic reviews related to cross-cutting issues have been initiated and co-financed by IFAD and other partners, with special reference to cassava markets: product definition and market identification at national and international levels; environmental aspects such as pollution from processing, soil fertility management, and soil erosion control; and food security, gender and nutrition.

10. A draft strategy document was produced in 1998 on the basis of the above studies, and subsequently reviewed at regional level during stakeholder workshops which helped determine regional priorities. Successive regional consultations took place as follows:

- in Latin America (Cali, Colombia ) in April 1998, with CIAT as convenor;
- in East and Southern Africa (Kampala, Uganda) in June 1998, under the aegis of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA);
- in Asia (Bangkok, Thailand) in November 1998, organized by CIAT.

11. In Cotonou, Benin, in November 1998, a brainstorming session on research priorities was organized by African researchers from 34 countries, on the occasion of the seventh symposium of the Africa branch of the International Society for Tropical Roots and Tubers.

12. The only remaining regional consultation is for West and Central Africa stakeholders, now scheduled for mid-May 1999 in Accra, Ghana. To ensure ownership by stakeholders, the consultation has been delayed to allow the West African Conference of Agricultural Research Managers (CORAF) to complete ongoing, priority-setting activities according to agro-ecological zones within the sub-region. The Accra meeting will provide an opportunity to draw up an Action Plan for Root and Tuber



Development in the West and Central Africa region, for which IFAD assistance has been requested by the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of West and Central Africa. Discussion will cover, *inter alia*:

- consolidation of CORAF's Roots and Tubers Network and its linkages to the Roots and Tubers Networks in East Africa (EARRNET) and Southern Africa (SARRNET);
- regional project activities to promote food security, income and employment-generation through diversification of cassava products and expansion of markets;
- priority investment projects for potential follow-up at country level by IFAD or other donors.

### **Interim outcome and linkages of strategic planning**

13. Completed case studies and ongoing consultations have contributed towards increasing the level of awareness of stakeholders about new investment and partnership opportunities. This process has also encouraged the initiation of follow-up activities, and their operational linkages with other relevant initiatives at field level, thus laying the ground for future implementation of the strategic plan. Some of these initiatives are briefly discussed below:

- as a significant step towards the establishment of effective international consultation mechanisms bringing together governmental representatives from the major cassava-producing and consuming countries, a decision was taken in 1998 to extend the mandate of FAO's Inter-Governmental Group (IGG) on Grains and Pulses as an institutional channel for submission of roots and tubers development projects for (co-)financing by the Common Fund for Commodities. Against this background, a long term projection of supply and demand up to year 2005 was supplemented in 1998 by a global market study funded by FAO, IDRC and IFAD, to define cassava-based products for household consumption and industrial use, and to identify domestic markets in producing countries and potential export markets in Europe and North America.
- in light of the needs and opportunities identified during the Latin America and the Caribbean stakeholders' consultation, CIAT put forward a proposal for establishing a region-wide, non-profit, consortium for cassava development, bringing together representatives from public and private sectors, as well as NGOs and farmers' organizations. The objective is to establish a "self-financing mechanism for setting priorities, defining strategies and funding international collaborative cassava research activities that are considered by consortium members to be essential for the development of the crop in their respective countries". CIAT is already actively collaborating with IFAD-supported projects in the region (for example in Brazil and Colombia), where arrangements have been made for training segments of IFAD's target group in the production of animal feed, using cassava roots and foliage, as an option for income diversification.
- in sub-Saharan Africa, regional project proposals have been prepared by IITA, under the aegis of the sub-regional roots and tubers networks in West and Central Africa, and in East and Southern Africa. Project activities are aimed at promoting sustainable production, agro-processing and market expansion with a view to improving the incomes of women and the poor; and strengthening sub-regional research networks.
- strategic planning activities in sub-Saharan Africa (in West and Central Africa in particular) are based on significant IFAD experience in cassava development at country level. Ghana's commitment to and long-standing experience in cassava development (including supply of traditional foodstuffs to local and urban markets, and private-sector exports of cassava chips) provides a promising basis for a comprehensive approach to the development of commodity systems. Combined IFAD/World Bank project portfolios in Ghana comprise a diversity of interventions, ranging from rural infrastructure to provision of agricultural and rural financial services, hence the possibility of mobilizing a critical mass of activities as a contribution to agricultural transformation (i.e. graduating from subsistence farming to sustainable resource



management). The results of IFAD's previous interventions in Ghana will be consolidated in the context of the recently-launched Roots and Tubers Improvement Programme with a two-pronged emphasis on distribution of improved planting material and promotion of processing and market linkages.

- a similar programme is planned in Nigeria, as a follow-up to the IFAD-assisted Cassava Multiplication Programme, which has contributed to a more than three-fold increase in national cassava output, making Nigeria the world's biggest producing country.
- the Government of the Republic of Niger has recently requested IFAD's assistance to implement a national initiative for cassava development including trials, multiplication and distribution of improved varieties adapted to Sahelian conditions, and promotion of cassava processing and marketing.
- in Benin, the government's commitment to cassava development and the promising achievements of IFAD's ongoing income-generation and microfinance programmes open up good prospects for field linkages.
- in the Asia and the Pacific region, there is broad consensus that cassava has a pivotal role to play in rural development. This role continues to evolve, driven largely by the globalization of markets, long-term income growth, increasing populations, new technology options for cassava and alternative energy sources. The role of cassava in contributing towards development revolves around future product options that rely on concentration, innovation, and/or competition. A wide range of product and marketing options make cassava a highly flexible component in a development strategy aimed at generating income and protecting the environment, the two goals cited as most important for the region. The product categories deemed to have high potential for the region are: starch (native and modified); starch derivatives (a wide range of household and industrial products); snack and ethnic foods; and flour and animal feed. The three research and development activities identified as most important for realizing development goals are: process and product development, market development, and varietal improvement. The identification of potential projects has followed these themes to a large degree, but with one proposal aimed at reducing the environmental impact of starch processing.

### **The next steps in strategy formulation and implementation**

14. After the forthcoming Accra meeting from 10 to 14 May 1999, which will conclude the series of regional stakeholder consultations, a round up workshop from 8 to 9 June 1999 in Rome will bring together members of the core working group (FAO, CIAT, IITA, CIRAD and NRI) and key donors representatives, to take stock of the outcome of the strategic planning process, agree on the process to endorse the strategy, and lay the groundwork for smooth implementation start up.

15. An international forum of stakeholders will be held from 19 to 21 October 1999 for final approval of the strategy document and the related implementation plan. Potential contributions to implementation of the strategy will also be discussed in the context of ongoing or planned projects and investment or technical assistance programmes, with funding from the private and public sectors, including domestic resources as well as external loans or grants. A final report on the outcome of the forum and related commitments will be submitted in due course to the IFAD Executive Board.