



IFAD
INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
Executive Board — Sixty-Sixth Session

Rome, 28-29 April 1999

**WORKING WITHIN A COMMON DEVELOPMENT AGENDA:
GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORKS AND
IFAD'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE UNITED NATIONS REFORM PROCESS**



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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At the Sixty-Fifth Session of the Executive Board in December 1998, the President undertook to provide Board Members with a report on IFAD's relationship to the key coordination mechanisms of the United Nations, within the context of the evolving reform of the system. The reform programme emphasizes the importance of policy and operational coordination among the major United Nations agencies in support of a common integrated framework of international commitments for poverty eradication and environmental sustainability. The present outline describes the core features of the common development agenda of the United Nations and bilateral development assistance community. It also describes the principal interagency coordination mechanisms central to the implementation of those commitments and how IFAD relates to them.

Working Within a Common Framework of Commitments

2. By participating in interagency coordination committees, the Fund enhances both its own activities and those of its sister organizations in the pursuit of common goals. This works to the benefit of IFAD's Member States and its clients, the rural poor. Participation in coordination activities helps the Fund to design projects that complement other organizations' work, thus ensuring efficient use of resources and reducing unnecessary duplication. Furthermore, such engagement heightens awareness of the Fund's work and increases its effectiveness as an innovator and knowledge institution. Such mechanisms provide a forum for drawing attention to the unique concerns and circumstances of the rural poor and ensuring they are considered during the development of project initiatives and programmatic activities. Sharing lessons learned and best practices also encourages other programmes and agencies to adopt the approaches IFAD has pioneered and to integrate them into their own activity portfolios.

3. Three specific initiatives have been taken by the United Nations system and the donor community in recent years in an attempt to sharpen the focus of development initiatives on agreed core targets, facilitate alignment of donor priorities to such targets and improve donor coordination through partnerships in the pursuit of common objectives, as discussed below.

A. Development Assistance Committee (DAC)

4. In 1996, the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development adopted a policy document entitled 'Shaping the 21st Century: the Contribution of Development Cooperation' to reflect a shared commitment to poverty eradication following a decade of declining official development assistance commitment levels and rising absolute levels of poverty. The proposal embodied in the report was to form a global development partnership around a limited set of measurable goals from which the development community might measure its effectiveness. Drawing from the many targets set at major international forums¹, six major goals were identified in the areas of economic well-being, social development and environmental regeneration:

¹ Education (Jomtien, 1990); Children (New York, 1990); Nutrition (Rome, 1992); Environment (Rio de Janeiro, 1992); Human Rights (Vienna, 1993); Population (Cairo, 1994); Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995); Women (Beijing, 1995), Human Settlements (Istanbul, 1996); and Food Security (Rome, 1996).



- a 50% reduction, by the year 2015, in the proportion of people living in extreme poverty;
- universal primary education in all countries by 2015;
- progress toward gender equality and empowerment of women through the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005;
- a two-thirds reduction in child mortality rates and a three-fourths reduction in maternal mortality rates by 2015;
- access to reproductive health services for all individuals of appropriate age by 2015; and
- implementation of national strategies for sustainable development in all countries by 2005 to ensure that current trends in the loss of environmental resources are reversed at the global and national levels by 2015.

5. Poverty eradication has been IFAD's core mandate since its inception in 1978. In 1996, the Fund began to streamline its operations so as to focus even more clearly and effectively on two related global targets that emerged (i) from the Copenhagen United Nations Summit for Social Development: halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by the year 2015; and (ii) from the World Food Summit: a 50% reduction in the number of undernourished people by 2015. The estimated number of undernourished people or absolute poor in the world at the time of the above-mentioned summits ranged from 800 million to 1.3 billion. The Fund's proposed medium-term programme is even more explicit about the impact that its operations will make in contributing to such objectives.

B. United Nations Reform Programme and Partnership and Coordination Efforts

6. Another important initiative aimed at improving aid effectiveness concerns the recently-proposed United Nations programme for reform. Key elements of the programme designed to increase coherence within the family of United Nations development funds and programmes include the appointment of a Deputy Secretary-General whose responsibilities cut across operational programmes; the establishment of a United Nations 'development group' to manage existing programmes and facilitate joint policy formulation, programmatic cooperation and management efficiency; and the establishment of common premises and coordination frameworks at the country level to bring individual funds and programmes under the direction of a Resident Coordinator.

The United Nations Development Group (UNDG)

7. In July 1997, the Secretary-General of the United Nations initiated a reform programme aimed at transforming the organization's leadership and management structure to enable it to act with greater unity of purpose, coherence of effort and agility in responding to the many challenges facing the international community. Greater collaboration between core missions of the United Nations is to be obtained through the establishment of executive committees in the areas of peace and security, economic and social affairs, development cooperation and humanitarian affairs.

8. In the area of development cooperation, United Nations funds/programmes and other entities have been grouped into the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) with a view to enhancing the effectiveness and impact of the system's development activities. The former sub-groups of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) have also been incorporated into the UNDG, the objectives of which are to facilitate joint policy formation and decision-making, encourage



programmatic cooperation and accomplish management efficiency. The JCGP is chaired by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and comprises representatives of IFAD, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Regional Commissions, the World Food Programme (WFP), and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict.

9. The undg Executive Committee comprises representatives of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP and other entities that participate as warranted by their interest and mandate. The Committee's purpose is to sharpen the contribution of each entity towards the United Nations' overall objectives by serving as a policy development and management instrument, strengthening policy coherence and avoiding duplications.

10. undg is made up of technical sub-groups relating to programme policies; programme operations; personnel and training; Resident Coordinator issues; common premises and services; and information and gender; and the Ad Hoc Group on the Right to Development. Other substantial groups, e.g. on human rights, and ad hoc groups may be established by the undg as required. The sub-groups meet regularly in pursuit of the objectives set out in their respective annual workplans. The position of chair of the sub-groups will continue to rotate between member agencies, as appropriate for individual sub-groups. A staff member of IFAD's Liaison Office in New York participates in a variety of meetings and working groups associated with the sub-groups and reports back to headquarters. Whenever appropriate, IFAD headquarter staff also participate in such meetings.

11. The JCGP was established in 1981 to bring together the five development funds/programmes of the United Nations system (IFAD, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO)) in the fight against poverty, hunger and deprivation. In 1997, a review of JCGP was conducted following reform of the United Nations Secretariat and its intergovernmental structures. As a result, it was decided that JCGP would be linked to the Executive Committee of the recently-created undg, and that high-level JCGP meetings would instead become informal discussions among the five executive heads during Executive Committee meetings of the undg. It was also decided that biannual meetings of JCGP members would continue to be held at the same time and venue as the ACC (Administrative Committee on Coordination) meetings attended by IFAD management.

12. IFAD has contributed greatly to the JCGP through its working groups and sub-groups on Africa and on gender. Here again, the position of chair has rotated between members agencies.

13. In October 1995, the JCGP decided to develop a mechanism for furthering understanding of priority issues for action through individual organizations' country programmes and for collective interventions. To this end, it was agreed to launch the Common Country Assessment (CCA) initiative, a country-based process for reviewing and analysing national development situations and identifying key issues as a basis for policy dialogue and advocacy. The CCA is expected to be a widely participatory process involving the United Nations system, government, civil society and the donor community aimed at stimulating constructive interaction and debate on all issues having an impact on national development. As such, the CCA is an essential first step in the preparation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) (described below) inasmuch as it generates a common understanding of the development problems, needs and priorities of individual countries. The results of the CCA should facilitate joint planning and programme formulation with



national partners and the donor community. Where appropriate, the CCA will also be valuable to the Country Strategy Note (CSN) planning process.

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)

14. As a key component of the Secretary-General's proposal, the UNDAF is central to country-level reform. The basic principle behind UNDAF in terms of the United Nations reform is the need to demonstrate that each agency is an integral part of a wider United Nations mandate. Through UNDAF, all United Nations funds/programmes involved in development work within a given country are to join together under the Resident Coordinator System (RCS) to strengthen the quality of the support they provide in respect of the priorities of the nations concerned.

15. The guiding principles of the UNDAF are to:

- (a) ensure that all processes lead to the prime objective of strengthening national capacities;
- (b) establish improved systems for information-sharing and common databases;
- (c) enhance coordination;
- (d) translate coordination into collaboration and ensure a goal-oriented approach;
- (e) demonstrate, through all the above and other processes, the value-added created by a team approach, ensuring complementary and closing gaps;
- (f) establish processes that are interactive and create synergistic partnerships; and
- (g) provide for accountability of each organization through, inter alia, a strengthened country programming process.

16. To this effect, the UNDAF will seek to highlight the major development challenges facing a given country, its key national development goals, strategies and priorities. It will also indicate how the United Nations system proposes to respond to these challenges, building on mechanisms and existing documentation available at the country level.

17. The UNDAF supports the CSN process by providing a coherent framework for assistance from United Nations funds/programmes. The CSN is a policy statement, prepared by government with the assistance and in collaboration with the organizations of the United Nations system, and constitutes the outcome of a process of consultation between the government, the United Nations system and the donor community. The CSN indicates national priorities to be supported by the United Nations system and gives a broad frame of reference for operational activities for development. Normally covering a period of four-to-five years, the CSN is aimed at achieving better relevance, coordination and impact of operational activities undertaken by the United Nations system.

18. The UNDAF pilot phase has been launched in 19 countries² and nine exercises have been completed to date. Lessons drawn during the pilot phase will be translated into an effective learning, feedback and support system. IFAD has voluntarily joined UNDAF in view of its special status as a United Nations specialized agency. However, partly because of its lack of field staff, the Fund's

² Africa: Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Senegal, South Africa, Zimbabwe; Asia: India, Philippines, Viet Nam; Near East and North Africa: Morocco; Latin America and the Caribbean: Colombia, Guatemala, Jamaica; Europe and countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States: Romania, Turkey.



participation is limited. A study is being made of how CCAs can increase the impact of IFAD's efforts in certain countries and of how the Fund may incorporate the best practices thus identified into its portfolio. Indeed, the Fund is considering the possibility of participating, on a pilot basis, in UNDAF processes in three or four countries in the future.

Global Targets, the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and its Relation to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)

19. Against this backdrop of institutional reforms at the headquarters and field levels, significant progress has been made to promote coherent planning and coordination of United Nations efforts in support of agreed international development commitments. Such commitments are part of a normative framework that has been sharpened through a series of world-level summits and conferences which — particularly in the 1990s — emphasized strategies for the eradication of extreme poverty. As a result of the United Nations initiative to integrate diverse international commitments into a consolidated, time-bound development agenda, two documents now constitute the official system-wide policy guidance on poverty eradication: the 'ACC Statement of Commitment to Eradicate Poverty'³ (ACC, March 1998), and 'Freedom from Poverty: A Framework for Action'⁴ (Consultative Committee on Programmes and Operational Questions (CCPOQ), September 1998). Both documents are used as working tools for the RCS in relation to poverty eradication under the UNDAF and in preparation for the CCAs.

20. The 'Freedom from Poverty' document is a matrix of nine policy measures, related core elements and possible areas of collaboration at the country level. Policy measures include:

- creating an enabling environment to combat poverty and promote pro-poor economic growth;
- investing in and maintaining physical infrastructure, including that targeted for low-income communities;
- access to basic social services, including health, reproductive health and family planning, education and sanitation, with special measures to reach women and children;
- securing a sustainable livelihood for the poor, including access to productive assets such as credit;
- advancing gender equality and equity, including the economic, legal and political empowerment of women;
- ensuring sustainable food security and the right to food in low-income households;
- regenerating the natural resource base upon which the poor depend;
- good governance and political empowerment of the poor; and
- provision of social protection for vulnerable people, including indigenous peoples.

³ See below for a description of the ACC.

⁴ See below for a description of CCPOQ.



21. IFAD has contributed to drafting the above framework through its participation in CCPOQ meetings and continues to promote and monitor its evolution. The CCPOQ has endorsed IFAD's recommendations for enhancing the matrix by focusing on particular rural poverty issues as concerned agencies continue to refine modalities for coordination and participation through the RCS. The Fund continues to engage in the RCS on a selective basis in due consideration of the value that the framework can leverage for projects that (as in the case of the World Bank partnership framework presented below) must be implemented without the benefit of a regular IFAD field presence.

C. World Bank Partnership for Development Initiative

22. The third important initiative is that launched by the World Bank in the context of its 'Strategic Compact' introduced in 1997. The organizing principle of the approach is that, through partnerships with all development actors, national and international, greater leverage can be achieved for the Bank's resources and advice. In 1998, the Bank conducted a broad-based consultation on partnership modalities and objectives through a series of initiatives on the theme of 'partnership for development'. With other multilateral financing institutions, IFAD participated in a roundtable consultation on this process in Washington, DC in October 1998. The model of partnerships that emerged includes the participation of national governments, the private sector, civil-society organizations and international agencies.

23. The approach that the World Bank is testing in approximately ten countries⁵ involves the following steps:

- **An assessment of country needs** to be led by the government is launched at the national and subnational level, involving the private sector and civil society, as a basis to define the national development strategy.
- **Building a national development strategy.** National strategies are to be developed describing each aid institution's assistance strategy.
- **Financing the strategy.** A 'Development Partners' Coalition', convened by the government, will convene a meeting at which each development partner will pledge its support to the national development strategy.
- **Implementing and assessing programmes and projects.** Partnership frameworks will be designed on the basis of agreed assistance strategies to promote partner coordination and harmonization of activities, in line with country requirements.

24. Following on from the 'partnership for development' groundwork, for 1999, the World Bank has proposed a holistic approach to conceptualizing and organizing country strategies in a manner that will take proper account of the financial, institutional and social dimensions of development. The proposal is known as a 'comprehensive development framework', the basic idea being to establish for each country a matrix that sets overall objectives and describes what various players are doing in a number of policy areas, thereby avoiding duplication and conflict.

25. The framework, formulated in terms of the 'prerequisites for sustainable growth and poverty alleviation', presents the prerequisites clustered into four categories (institutional, human, physical and country specific strategies). The vertical axis of the matrix lists the four traditional partners in development, namely, government, multilateral/bilateral institutions, civil society and the private

⁵ Bolivia, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Ghana, the United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam and several East Caribbean States.



sector. The World Bank has decided to test the scheme in the same pilot countries to explore the possibility of both promoting a national consensus on a development strategy and coordinating development partnerships.

26. IFAD has had a long and fruitful history of collaboration with the World Bank. This has involved Bank cofinancing and supervision of IFAD projects and collaboration in programmes such as the Regional Unit for Technical Assistance in Central America and the Popular Coalition to Eradicate Hunger and Poverty. Moreover, as a member of the Facilitation Committee, the Bank actively supports the Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, housed by IFAD. In West Africa, IFAD and the Bank have already established a framework for increased collaboration, focusing on rural development strategies in eight countries.⁶ IFAD operates in all countries or regions suggested as pilots for the 'partnership for development' programme. However, as the Fund has no field representation, its involvement in such partnership initiatives also depends on sufficient notice being given to Country Portfolio Managers regarding meetings at the country level.

II. IFAD AND RELATIONS WITH OTHER MAJOR UNITED NATIONS COORDINATION MECHANISMS

Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC)

27. The ACC is a standing committee responsible for supervising implementation of agreements between the United Nations and its specialized agencies. The Committee was established in 1946 by the Economic and Social Council under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. As a forum for furthering inter-secretariat cooperation within the United Nations system, the ACC ensures coordination of programmes approved by the governing bodies of the various organizations and, more generally, promotes cooperation within the system in pursuit of the common goals of Member States. Through the ACC, IFAD has promoted United Nations engagement with civil society and contributed to the strategy for post-crisis situations and to the development of the ACC Statement of Commitment to Eradicate Poverty. It has also helped develop coordinated responses to system-wide concerns, such as personnel practices.

28. Membership of the ACC comprises executive heads of the United Nations specialized agencies (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Civil Aviation Organization, IFAD⁷, International Labour Organization, International Maritime Organization, International Monetary Fund, International Telecommunication Union, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, Universal Postal Union, World Bank, World Health Organization, World Intellectual Property Organization and World Meteorological Organization), plus the International Atomic Energy Agency and World Trade Organization; and nine United Nations programmes (UNCTAD, United Nations Environment Programme, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near

⁶ Implementation has started in Ghana and Guinea and will cover six additional countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, The Gambia, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal.

⁷ Administrative relations with key bodies are as follows: together with other United Nations agencies, IFAD is involved in CCAQ meetings dealing with personnel, finance and budget issues. The cost of the CCAQ Secretariat is shared in proportion to the number of staff. In 1999, IFAD's contribution to CCAQ is expected to be approximately USD 30 000. During the 1998-99 biennium, the Fund contributed USD 5 000 to the CCPOQ budget. During the 1994-1995 biennium, IFAD contributed USD 84 000 to the technical secretariat of ACC/Subcommittee on Nutrition while for the 1996-1997 biennium it contributed USD 10 000. No contribution is contemplated for the current biennium.



East). The ACC meets twice-yearly, and periodically holds joint meetings with the Committee for Programme and Coordination. The subsidiary machinery of the ACC consists of:

- A. Organizational Committee
 - Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC)
 - Information Systems Coordination Committee
 - Ad hoc bodies
- B. Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ)
 - Personnel questions
 - Financial and budgetary questions
- C. Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD)
 - ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources
 - ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas
- D. Consultative Committee on Programmes and Operational Questions (CCPOQ)
 - Network on Rural Development and Food Security
 - ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities
 - ACC Subcommittee on Demographic Estimates and Projections
 - ACC Subcommittee on Drug Control
 - ACC Subcommittee on Nutrition

Consultative Committee on Programmes and Operational Questions (CCPOQ)

29. The CCPOQ was set up by the ACC in April 1993 through a merger of the former Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions to deal with competencies in the areas of operational activities and programme matters. The ACC approved expanded terms of reference for the committee to incorporate relevant aspects of the functions of a number of discontinued inter-agency bodies. The CCPOQ meets in regular session twice-yearly and reports directly to the ACC. It advises and assists ACC on a wide range of issues with a view to promoting complementarities and mobilizing the United Nations system's analytical, normative and operational capacities for economic and social development in support of common goals and agreed strategies.

30. By participating in CCPOQ, IFAD has contributed effectively to the reform of policies that guide the RCS, enabling the Resident Coordinator selection process to be expanded to include representatives of specialized agencies. This is reflected in the current composition of the Resident Coordinators, a significant number of whom are former staff members of United Nations agencies. IFAD has also contributed to the adoption of the operational guidelines for Resident Coordinators, which effectively ensure that they are aware of, and focus on, the unique needs of the rural poor. It has also contributed to the CCPOQ's operational activities reference manual and to its study on poverty eradication.

31. Following a joint IFAD/FAO proposal to CCPOQ, at its April 1997 session the ACC decided to establish a global, consultative network on rural development and food security to replace the former ACC Subcommittee on Rural Development. The network constitutes the mechanism for inter-agency follow-up to the World Food Summit and supports the Popular Coalition to Eradicate Hunger and Poverty. It is a two-tiered informal mechanism that comprises, at the country level, thematic groups on rural development and food security within the United Nations/RCS and, at the headquarters level, a network of interested organizations that support such national groups.



32. Closely related to the work of the above-mentioned network is the Inter-Agency Working Group on Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems (FIVIMS), which has its permanent secretariat in Rome. As an information system and framework at the national and international levels, FIVIMS strives to increase attention on food security issues; enhance the quality of food-related data and analysis; and improve access to information through networking and sharing. Systems already in place relevant to FIVIMS provide information on agriculture, health, land, water and climate, and vulnerability assessment and mapping. The specific focus of IFAD's active participation in the inter-agency working group and its sub-groups is on the household dimension of food security.

ACC Sub-committee on Nutrition (SCN)

33. IFAD is also a member of the ACC Sub-committee on Nutrition (SCN).⁸ The ACC/SCN is the focal point for harmonizing United Nations system policies and activities in nutrition. The subcommittee serves as a coordinating mechanism for exchanges of information and technical guidance and is responsible for overseeing the direction, scale, coherence and impact of United Nations response to the world's nutritional problems. Discussions are currently under way within the ACC regarding the question of changing the committee's name to 'United Nations Nutrition Council' so as to provide it with an enhanced profile as the most senior United Nations body dealing with nutrition issues. IFAD set up the ACC/SCN Working Group on Household Food Security and chaired it for the first two years of its existence. In that capacity, in 1995, IFAD housed a two-day workshop attended by representatives of United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and universities for the purpose of explaining the objectives of the working group and defining the relationship between household food security and nutrition. At the present time, IFAD is engaged in an ongoing dialogue with committee members and in commenting on relevant documents.

The Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC)

34. JUNIC is a subcommittee of the ACC that groups United Nations directors/chiefs of public affairs and information. Within the JUNIC framework, discussions are held on joint information activities such as World Food Day and Hannover 2000 information strategies. JUNIC publishes a monthly newsletter of events and projects and a yearly calendar of meetings, events and other development-related activities. IFAD is a member of JUNIC and participates in all its activities, including the newsletter.

⁸ The United Nations members of the ACC/SCN are FAO, IAEA, IFAD, ILO, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, United Nations University, WFP, WHO and the World Bank.