



IFAD
INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
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STATUS REPORT ON THE RURAL POVERTY REPORT 2000

1. In accordance with the request of the Executive Board at its Sixty-Sixth Session to receive regular reports on the progress of activities leading to the publication of IFAD's Rural Poverty Report 2000, information notes were presented to the Sixty-Seventh Session of the Executive Board and the Fourth Session of the Consultation to Review the Adequacy of the Resources Available to IFAD.
2. The attached document, which provides an updated status report, is presented to the Executive Board for its information.



STATUS REPORT ON THE RURAL POVERTY REPORT 2000

1. In approving a technical assistance grant (TAG) for the programme of activities leading to the issuing of IFAD's Rural Poverty Report 2000 at its Sixty-Sixth Session (April 1999), the Executive Board requested regular reports on the progress of activities envisaged under the grant. This information note provides an overview of the activities undertaken and the progress made to date.

Objective of IFAD's Rural Poverty Report 2000 and the Programme of Activities

2. The objective of IFAD's Rural Poverty Report 2000 is to present a statement on rural poverty issues from the perspective of a financing organization such as IFAD. It will focus on the critical nature of rural poverty eradication in reducing global poverty, identify relevant options and opportunities, build coalitions with a wide range of development agencies and civil-society organizations, and increase awareness on critical issues.

3. The activities envisaged under the approved programme are: (i) assessment and analysis of regional rural poverty trends based on IFAD's experience in the field; (ii) identification of broad themes on which further in-depth work will be initiated; (iii) thematic studies; (iv) preparation of the main report with annexes; (v) editing, printing and issuance of the report; and (vi) launching of the report.

Report on the Progress of Activities Undertaken

Regional Assessments and IFAD's Internal Workshop, 26-27 July 1999

4. As foreseen in the programme of activities, five regional assessments have been completed since the approval of the grant. These reports captured IFAD's experiences with rural poverty eradication in each of its five regions.

5. A workshop was held at IFAD on 26 and 27 July 1999 to present the results of the regional assessments to a wider audience within the organization. The analysis and information were also shared with some select, invited participants. The discussion in the workshop led to the identification of four themes that will be critical in solving rural poverty in the coming years:

- access to assets (including human capital)
- technology and agricultural transformation
- institutions, with a specific focus on rural financial
- access to markets in the context of globalization.

6. These issues, along with the cross-cutting issues of demographic trends, gender and empowerment, were the subject of four thematic papers and a paper on the perception of civil societies on rural poverty eradication.

IFAD Workshop on Rural Poverty 2000

7. On 24-25 January 2000, an IFAD workshop on Rural Poverty 2000 was held in its headquarters in Rome. During these two days, over 80 academicians, development practitioners from sister organizations, bilateral partners and civil-society-organizations, members of the Executive Board and a large number of IFAD's operational staff participated; they discussed the issues raised by the following papers:



- "Assets and Rural Poverty", by John Hoddinott, Lawrence Haddad and Sanjukta Mukherjee;
- "Technology, Natural Resources Management and the Poor", by Peter Hazell, Pamela Jagger and Anna Kox;
- "Institutions and the Poor", by S. R. Osmani;
- "The Rural Poor and the Wider Economy: The Problem of Market Access", by Anthony Killick, Jonathan Kydd and Colin Poulton; and
- "Civil-Society Organizations and their Role in People's Empowerment and Rural Poverty Eradication", by Cristina Liamzon.

8. A purpose of the workshop was to finalize the outline of the main report, which the lead scholar, Professor Lipton, prepared on the basis of the comments received. An abridged version is presented in paragraph 12.

9. The report of the workshop is being finalized. Copies of revised thematic papers and the transcription of the workshop are available on request.

Public Lecture of Mr Sartaj Aziz

10. In order to create a greater public awareness of rural poverty issues, IFAD initiated a series of public lectures by prominent people on poverty issues and the agenda for reduction of rural poverty. The first lecture was titled "The Unfinished Task of Eradicating Rural Poverty" by Senator Aziz, the former Minister for Foreign Affairs and former Minister for Finance of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and one of IFAD's founders. The lecture, held at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in a spirit of collaboration among Rome-based agencies, was attended by about 250 participants from the Rome-based agencies and NGOs.

Outline of IFAD's Rural Poverty Report 2000

11. IFAD's Rural Poverty Report 2000 proposes a framework for rural poverty reduction based on recent development experience and prospects for the coming decades. Utilizing the above-mentioned regional assessments and thematic studies, the report will highlight the following issues in rural poverty eradication:

- technologies for turning inputs into outputs, and income into consumption and well-being;
- assets - physical, human and financial capital - available to individuals and communities;
- markets and market access, local, national and global, for labour, other inputs (including skills, credit and information) and outputs, and their availability to the rural poor; and
- institutions and forms of civil society that influence resource allocation, availability and use, especially through poor people's access to local and national governance.

12. IFAD sees three central issues through which these determinants will affect rural poverty in the next two decades: food staples, water and redistribution. The framework of staples, water and redistribution cuts across the more conventional sectoral framework of interventions; a matrix of these cross-cutting issues has been prepared to guide the preparation of the IFAD report. Each theme has a supply and a demand side. For instance, staples output and yields can be increased by the supply of technological input and reduction of water stress, through public provision and donor support. Whether the right sort of technology is forthcoming – the poor normally gain most from robust, labour-intensive ways to grow more food staples – depends, however, on demand for crops, other farm and non-farm products, and labour and scientific skills. In both local and global markets, the sort of technology that is demanded (and hence in the long run supplied) depends on distribution of land, of income-based demand for agricultural products and of control and influence over institutions



(including the private and public sources of agricultural technology and research), and forms of civil society. Yet technology alone is insufficient. IFAD and other multilateral donors also need to improve market access (the recent processes of liberalization and globalization are relevant in this context), and increase assets (physical, human and perhaps financial and social) of the rural poor. At the same time, the rural poor can be encouraged (through decentralization, empowerment and participation) to acquire 'political assets' in civil society, to make the state accountable and to relieve transport, information, education and other constraints on the poor's transactions, and hence on their proper access to necessary inputs. International donors (such as IFAD) have a major role to play.

13. The cross-cutting issues for rural poverty reduction – staples, water and redistribution - will be analysed, in turn, using the above supply-demand framework in each of the four topic chapters (technology, assets, markets and institutions and civil society). In each case, the focus is: what works and what does not for raising income (and its social counterparts, i.e., better health, education, social inclusion) to the poor in a sustainable fashion? Consistency of poverty reduction (via growth and/or redistribution) with sustainability will be addressed. It will include: the choice of water delivery and maintenance technology; water-related assets, e.g., wells vs. canals; systems of water markets and pricing, and the access of the poor to them; institutions for water-sharing and management; and the role of civil society in sustaining community institutions of water systems management.

14. The first draft of the report is expected to be available by the end of May 2000. The final report will be published towards the end of the year after an intensive process of internal and external review.

15. A copy of the outline is also available on request (e-mail: at.rahman@ifad.org).

Involvement of Civil Society

16. Two initiatives are underway, which taken together, will strengthen the civil-society perspective of the rural poverty report. First, the lead scholar is preparing a paper on the emerging trends in the roles, responsibilities and relationships of civil-society organizations to the challenge of rural poverty, the links to other stakeholders and the effects of globalization on rural communities. This paper will examine the roles of civil society with regard to the study's four themes. Second, five regional NGOs and civil-society networks were engaged to provide an analysis of the perspective of civil society on strategies that provide the most promise of successfully empowering the rural poor to establish sustainable livelihood systems. This was done against the background of regional assessments prepared by IFAD. These reports were completed by mid-December and will be integrated in the overall report.

Collaboration with Other Agencies

17. In order to forge closer links with other agencies, discussions were held with the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) regarding their activities in related fields. A number of IFAD staff members attended a three-day summer workshop at the World Bank to learn about the focus and coverage of its World Development Report 2000/2001 and to hold discussions with relevant staff members.

18. As this document is being prepared, arrangements are being made for a presentation on IFAD's Rural Poverty Report 2000 to all the Executive Heads of the United Nations on the occasion of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) meeting in Rome, jointly hosted by WFP and IFAD. On 7 April, presentations are to be made at IFAD by representatives of the Fund, the World Bank and UNDP, showing the complementary of efforts in this area.



19. Discussions have also been held with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) to ascertain their interest and potential role in disseminating the findings of the poverty report. Both organizations showed keen interest; details of such collaboration will be worked out at a later date.

20. The Informal Network on Poverty Eradication of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) was contacted to exchange information on poverty alleviation issues. It will elaborate a programme in collaboration with UNDP for discussing issues with other United Nations organizations in relation to their preparation of “guidelines for development cooperation in support of poverty reduction”.

21. Discussions also were held with some Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) centres to receive in-depth information on technical possibilities for meeting the food gap in the future.

22. A website on IFAD’s Rural Poverty Report 2000 was set up to inform a wider audience of the progress of the report, and to disseminate the findings of various studies undertaken within the programme. The website is also intended to be a forum for exchange of information and debate on issues and challenges regarding rural poverty eradication.

Upcoming Events

23. IFAD will organize a series of public lectures of opinion leaders and academicians on poverty issues in 2000. The next lecture is by Professor M. S. Swaminathan, former Director of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI). It is expected to be delivered in the third week of May 2000.

Website on Rural Poverty Eradication

24. IFAD has been contacted by several bilateral partners for hosting discussion fora on its Rural Poverty Report 2000, with the objective of increasing awareness on rural poverty eradication and for strengthening partnerships. Four discussion fora, coordinated jointly with bilateral organizations in Europe and the United States, are planned.