



IFAD
INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Executive Board – Seventy-Second Session

Rome, 25-26 April 2001

**REPORT ON THE RURAL POVERTY REPORT 2001,
THE WORLD FOOD SUMMIT: FIVE YEARS LATER, AND FOLLOW-UP TO
THE MILLENNIUM SUMMIT**

1. In accordance with the request of the Executive Board at its Sixty-Sixth Session for regular reports on the progress of activities leading to the publication of IFAD's Rural Poverty Report 2001, information notes were presented to the Sixty-Seventh, Sixty-Ninth and the Seventy-First Sessions of the Executive Board and to the Fourth Session of the Consultation to Review the Adequacy of the Resources Available to IFAD.
2. The attached document, which provides a report on the launching of the Rural Poverty Report 2001: The Challenge of Ending Rural Poverty (hereafter Rural Poverty Report); the World Food Summit: Five Years Later; and Follow-Up to the Millennium Summit, is presented to the current Session of the Executive Board for information.



A. Launching of the Rural Poverty Report 2001

1. Since the last report to the Executive Board at its Seventy-First Session, Oxford University Press has published IFAD's Rural Poverty Report. In publishing this document, IFAD's aim is twofold: to highlight the major options and opportunities open to the rural poor for rising out of poverty; and to forge a broad coalition of partners to meet global targets for poverty alleviation. With a series of launching events in North America and Europe, the report's messages were disseminated to various communities, including the United Nations system of organizations; media outlets; the non-governmental organization (NGO) and corporate communities; and a broad cross-section of operational and policy experts from bilateral development agencies, international financial institutions and research institutes. These events were attended by a large, high-level delegation from IFAD including the President, Vice-President, the Assistant Presidents of the Economic Policy and Resource Strategy Department (ED) and the Management and Personnel Services Department, Directors and other staff of the Programme Management Department and of ED, and the Director of IFAD's North American Liaison Office in Washington, D.C.

Launching Events

2. The main launching of the Rural Poverty Report took place on 5 February 2001 at United Nations headquarters in New York. Some 107 guests, including 51 Permanent Representations of United Nations Missions, attended the ceremony, together with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Kofi Annan; Mr Harri Holkeri, President of the General Assembly; Mr Martin Belinga Eboutou, President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC); Mr Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General, Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA); Professor Michael Lipton of the University of Sussex; Ms Pelucy Ntambirweki, Executive Director, Ugandan Women's Efforts to Save Orphans; and Ms Jan Hopkins of CNN Television.

3. In preparing for the ECOSOC high-level event on "The Role of the United Nations in Support of the Efforts of African Countries to Achieve Sustainable Development", IFAD organized a panel discussion in collaboration with DESA. The President of IFAD and the Under-Secretary-General, DESA, made presentations to about 50 guests. Twelve persons took the floor, including the President of the European Union Council of Ministers and the Chairman of the Group of 77.

4. An NGO briefing, organized by the United Nations NGO Liaison Service (NGLS), took place on 6 February. The purpose of the briefing was both to draw the attention of ECOSOC-accredited and New York-based NGOs to the report and reach out to NGOs attending the Preparatory Committee of Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-III), held in parallel with the launching events.

5. On 7 February, IFAD and the Environmental Change and Security Project of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars co-hosted a presentation on the findings of the Rural Poverty Report. The presentation, which was attended by some 130 policymakers and development practitioners, was followed by a panel discussion on issues pertaining to rural poverty alleviation. Members of the panel were Mr George McGovern, Ambassador, United States Mission to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture; Mr John Mellor, Vice President of Abt Associates; and Ms Geeta Rao Gupta, President of the International Centre for Research on Women. During a luncheon, which was held on the same day and attended by more than 70 persons, the Vice-President of IFAD spoke of the reasons behind the Fund's decision to produce the Rural Poverty Report. This was followed by a discussion of findings by a panel comprising Mr David Beckman, President of Bread for the World Institute; Mr Peter McPherson, President of Michigan State University and former Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development; and Mr Rajul Pandya Lorch, Head of the 2020 Vision for Food, Agriculture and the Environment Initiative at the



International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). Both events were webcast (available at the following web address: <http://wwics.si.edu>).

6. On 8 February, the United States Chamber of Commerce, the Citizens' Network for Foreign Affairs and the Corporate Council on Africa hosted a special presentation by the President of IFAD for leaders in the corporate community.

7. The launching event held at IFPRI on the same day, which was hosted by its Director-General, was targeted at staff of multilateral development banks, academic institutions and 'think-tanks', and attracted a large audience. The event began with a statement by the Vice President of IFAD on the development of the report and on the rationale that had prompted IFAD to undertake it.

8. On 9 February, some 22 representatives of the United States NGO Working Group on IFAD met to discuss how the Rural Poverty Report could become a vehicle for supporting increased United States engagement both in IFAD and in efforts to eradicate rural poverty.

9. The Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized the 12 February launching event in Stockholm, Sweden, in collaboration with IFAD. The Minister for International Development Cooperation, Ms Maj-Inger Klingvall, made the official presentation of the Rural Poverty Report and presided over a meeting of approximately 30 participants from Swedish development organizations and research institutes. Mr Lennart Båge, then Head of the Division for International Development Cooperation at the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, closed the meeting. In his statement, Mr Båge highlighted a number of issues related to the strengthening of poor countries to derive more benefits from resources invested for poverty reduction; their ability to absorb more resources productively; and agricultural policy; and the need for better collaboration to meet the challenges of reducing by half the number of persons living in extreme poverty by the year 2015.

10. At the Paris launching on 13 February, a presentation on the Rural Poverty Report was made to the Poverty Network Group of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC). The objective here was to develop closer links with OECD/DAC guidelines for poverty eradication.

11. The launching of the Report in London on 15 February was organized by the Department for International Development in collaboration with IFAD. The Right Honourable Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development, was the main speaker. In their presentations, the Vice-President of IFAD and Professor Lipton emphasized the need to look more closely at the livelihoods of the poor and to ensure a more holistic approach to eradicating poverty.

12. In collaboration with IFAD and the Department for International Development, on 16 February, the University of Sussex hosted a seminar attended by academicians, United Nations/international financial institution officials and representatives of bilateral agencies.

13. At the Rome launching, copies of the Rural Poverty Report were distributed to all Governors and delegations attending the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Governing Council on 20-22 February. The Vice-President of IFAD made a presentation on the report, highlighting its main messages, and a video message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Kofi Annan, was screened.

Media Coverage

14. Extensive media coverage of the launching activities was organized by IFAD with the assistance of Associated Press Television News. A 'b-roll' roll was developed and disseminated through BBC World Television, O Globo (a Brazilian television network), Sky News, Reuters Television, Bloomberg Television, CNN, Middle East Broadcasting, British Satellite News and RAI News 24.



Both CNN and the BBC World Service carried interviews with IFAD staff on the Report and on its main messages. O Globo also aired interviews with IFAD staff.

15. On 7 February, the President of IFAD briefed nine journalists of the Washington, D.C., press corps during a ‘Newsmaker Breakfast’ at the National Press Club. Numerous media, including Associated Press, Reuters, The Financial Times, The Times of London, The Guardian and The Economist produced articles on IFAD. Television networks such as CNN International, BBC, O Globo and Worldwide Television also covered the event.

16. In Sweden, at a press conference on 12 February, organized in collaboration with the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the President of IFAD, the Secretary of State for International Development Cooperation, Ms Gun-Britt Andersson, and Professor Lipton made brief presentations on the report. The conference was reported in the daily press; IFAD also featured in the TV1 and TV2 evening news on 12 February when highlights of the report were discussed with a prominent Swedish political-economist, Mr Peter de Vylder. Radio Sweden aired segments from the press briefing and broadcast an interview with Mr Lennart Båge.

17. In London, The Financial Times, The Guardian, The Independent and The Daily Express published articles on the Report immediately following the initial New York launch. The Economist also published a concise report during the same week.

18. The report was presented to the media at the foreign press club in Rome on 19 February. The President of the foreign press club, Mr Antonio Pelayo, presented the Report to some 50 national and international print and broadcast journalists.

B. The World Food Summit: Five Years Later, and Follow-Up to the Millennium Summit

IFAD’s Contribution to Follow-Up on the World Food Summit

19. In November 1996, world leaders meeting at the World Food Summit in Rome committed themselves to halving the number of undernourished people in the developing world by the year 2015. To that end, the Summit endorsed seven commitments setting out how, and by whom, policies and actions aimed at sustained poverty alleviation and assuring food security could be achieved. In large measure the Summit served to make policy-makers aware of the extent of poverty which, as set out in the Rome Declaration on World Food Security, “is a major cause of food insecurity”, and to find ways of encouraging investment in poverty alleviation activities. The Rome Declaration and the Plan of Action of the World Food Summit also emphasized the need to create the right basic conditions, or enabling environment, for poverty alleviation activities to take place.

20. Some five years later, however, the indications are that the number of undernourished people in the world is falling at the rate of only 8 million each year, which is far below the average rate of 20 million per year needed to reach the 2015 target. Moreover, with more than 75% of the world’s poor located in rural areas, greater emphasis will need to be given to rural development and, in particular, to stimulating growth in the agricultural sector. In the light of this poor progress, a high-level “Five Years Later” follow-up meeting will be held on 5-9 November 2001 to consider measures for accelerating progress in reducing the number of undernourished people.

21. IFAD’s contribution to the World Food Summit of 1996 included a paper and inputs to the Rome Declaration and the Plan of Action, with particular emphasis on the importance of sustainable agriculture, fisheries, forestry and rural development in both low- and high-potential areas. IFAD’s paper, entitled “Household Food Security – Implications for Policy and Action for Rural Poverty



Alleviation and Nutrition”, stressed, among other things, the fundamental productive role played by women in ensuring food security and nutrition, especially at the household level.

22. Against this background, IFAD welcomes the opportunity afforded by the November 2001 “Five Years Later” meeting to review progress in meeting the objectives of the Plan of Action. The Fund’s contribution to the meeting will centre on its general orientation and approach to food security initiatives and rural poverty alleviation and activities relating to the so-called ‘people-centred commitments’ that were reviewed by the Committee on World Food Security at its meeting in 2000 as part of the regular cycle of reporting on World Food Summit follow-up.

23. Since its establishment in 1978, IFAD’s mandate has been to work with developing countries to combat hunger and rural poverty. To that end, the Fund has financed 578 projects and programmes, of which 235 are currently ongoing in 95 countries. Enhancing community and national food security has become a vital component of IFAD-supported projects in developing countries, both before and since the World Food Summit’s target was set.

24. IFAD has continued to focus on means of increasing food security through, for example, investments in both capital and social and institutional resources. IFAD’s lending in recent years has concentrated not so much on large infrastructure or even agricultural projects as on helping the poor rise out of poverty by means of institutional and political empowerment – through support to local capacity-building, access to rural finance, markets and market information and agricultural inputs and technology. While emphasis on working with local – often physically remote – communities has been a feature of the Fund’s lending activities, recent experience has confirmed that the scope of its operations must include interaction with central governments to ensure that IFAD’s policies and programmes are fully consistent with activities planned and implemented at the community level.

25. In the 1990s, IFAD pursued a vigorous policy of assisting governments and communities to increase women’s access to the productive resources they required to enhance household food security and nutrition. This meant ensuring that anthropometric surveying was included in baseline and other project evaluation surveys and developing memory checks on household food security and gender. Support to institution building to increase women’s empowerment and equity are also fundamental aspects of IFAD’s gender focus.

26. IFAD has also been following progress made in advancing the ‘right to food’. Insofar as the Fund works directly with governments that are recognized as central actors in acquiring the ‘right to food’, its role may most effectively be described as assisting governments to take positive action in this regard. Thus, the Fund seeks to help create enabling conditions for the rural poor to gain access to assets, economic and social services and fair markets, and the right to organize themselves and have a greater voice in decision-making, especially at the community level. Essentially, therefore, the Fund assists national governments in the design of programme and project activities and provides the resources necessary for carrying out such activities.

27. In poor families, women are largely responsible for producing or purchasing food and, as such, are regarded as the main entry point for ensuring household food security and nutritional well-being. Recognizing the different and frequently complementary roles of men and women within the household, over the last three years, IFAD has developed a number of analytical tools for development practitioners: a knowledge base on gender and household food security, including a website, discussion forum and the production of a CD ROM (2001); a hi-memory CD-card: Household Food Security and Gender – At the Centre of IFAD’s Poverty Alleviation Strategy; and memory checks for household food security and gender. The memory checks comprise a simple checklist of 14 issues to be addressed in project design, review and evaluation and are used for compiling socio-economic data in the field. Household food security and nutrition elements have also been included in the design of projects in Albania, Algeria, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Chad,



D.P.R. Korea, Guinea, Honduras, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Morocco, Pakistan, The Philippines and Swaziland.

28. IFAD recognizes that in some regions, such as Africa, and especially Sub-Saharan Africa, targeting the rural poor may translate into providing assistance to the majority of the population. Although it cannot possibly hope to reach such large numbers of people, by working in partnership with others, the Fund has acted as a catalyst to effect changes both within institutions and among various interest groups.

29. Since its inception, the Fund has worked with over 700 developing country NGOs and other civil-society organizations. In addition, through such special programmes as the NGO/Extended Cooperation Programme and the Belgian Survival Fund Joint Programme, IFAD has been able to extend its outreach to the most food-insecure people in all regions.

30. During the course of its work with rural populations, IFAD has learned a number of vital lessons that have been taken into account in preparing, implementing and monitoring project/programme impact. For example, work with large sectoral organizations is being increasingly replaced by listening to the needs of, and providing support to, local grass-roots organizations. In many regions, this has meant providing direct support to groups such as water users' associations, village associations and farmers' and traders' groups, including women's groups. Such community groups represent the direct interests of their members and help to instill a sense of ownership and responsibility among members, thereby creating better prospects for the sustainability of interventions.

31. IFAD has further enhanced its outreach to rural communities by working closely with network organizations, for example, the Popular Coalition to Eradicate Hunger and Poverty. The Popular Coalition was established for the purpose of creating a common strategy to empower the rural poor by means of reviving agrarian reform and increasing the participation of the poor in policies and decisions that affect their livelihoods.

32. Another such network organization is the Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD), which was established in October 1997 and, like the Popular Coalition, is housed at IFAD. The Global Mechanism acts as the focal point for a network of partners concerned with combating desertification by mobilizing financial resources and channeling flows of such resources to ensure equitable distribution.

33. In 1998, IFAD organized and hosted an inter-agency workshop on gender and household food security. It also took an active part in a number of inter-agency initiatives such as the Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems, the World Food Programme (WFP)-supported Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Units and the Network on Rural Development of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and its work with thematic groups.

34. IFAD took the lead in preparing, with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and WFP, the joint ACC Occasional Policy Paper Providing System-Wide Guidance on Household Food Security and Nutrition (2000). This paper, which incorporated inputs from the entire United Nations family, was adopted by the ACC/Consultative Committee on Policy and Operational Questions in September 2000 and by ECOSOC the following month.

35. In 2000, IFAD launched a knowledge management initiative by setting up thematic working groups in key areas such as rural finance, community-based rangelands management, diagnostic tools and small-scale, farmer-managed irrigated agriculture. It is also involved in financing a number of regional knowledge networks, using the most up-to-date information technology.



IFAD's Contribution to Follow-Up of the Millennium Summit

36. At the United Nations Social Summit, held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1995 it was agreed that each Member State should devise a programme for reducing extreme poverty. World leaders at the 1996 World Food Summit and, four years later, at the Millennium Summit in September 2000, resolved to "halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's poor people whose income is less than one dollar a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger."

37. Both before and since the Millennium Summit, IFAD has actively supported both national and international efforts for reducing poverty alleviation and enhancing food security among the poorest populations. In this context, IFAD's overall strategy may be defined as:

- influencing bilateral and multilateral donors to reverse the trend towards lower investment in agricultural and rural development due to its critical importance in poverty reduction;
- working with governments to rationalize public-sector expenditure to focus on key problems of access to goods and services faced by smallholders; and
- developing a highly targeted lending programme in support of projects that strengthen the capacity of the rural poor to manage local resources and create linkages to liberalized commodity and capital markets.

38. At the international level, IFAD has concentrated on attending global fora where it may most effectively convey its message, namely, that poverty alleviation interventions should be focused on rural areas where the majority of the poor live. For example, in October 2000, IFAD took part in a tripartite meeting of the executive heads of the three Rome-based food agencies with ECOSOC in New York. That meeting provided an opportunity for drawing the attention of ECOSOC Member States to the priority issue of rural poverty alleviation through agricultural and rural development.

39. The Fund's regular lending programme for financing agricultural and rural development projects/programmes increased by 40% during the period 1992-2000, whereas its administrative budget and project development costs were reduced by 26% over the same period. The provision of goods and services to the poor, which accounted for little more than half of all lending in 1992, had by 2000 risen to 80% of total loans. This has been possible thanks to a streamlined project cycle which ensures that projects are more responsive to the needs of the people for whom, and by whom, they are designed; and re-engineering of the Fund's operations.

40. The Millennium Declaration gives priority to "meeting the special needs of Africa". Since its inception, IFAD has placed particular emphasis on alleviating rural poverty and to halting environmental degradation throughout the Africa region. Flooding and desertification threaten the livelihoods of millions of farmers and other rural dwellers in Africa, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and parts of the Sahel.

41. In providing support, *inter alia*, to the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), 2001-2010, IFAD attended the Preparatory Committee for LDC-III and the Interagency Coordinating Meeting in preparation for the conference, held in February and March 2001, respectively.

42. In particular, the Fund supports the call to all development partners to "ensure that donor support leads to genuine strengthening of national capacities in LDCs and does not replace them"; to help LDCs address "the undercapitalization in agriculture, as well as its low productivity by increasing public investment outlays for programmes to enhance investment in rural economic and social infrastructure"; and "strengthening support institutions for agriculture and rural development...". The Programme of Action for LDCs gives further impetus for implementation of the World Food



Summit's target to halve the number of chronically undernourished people by 2015. IFAD is committed to integrating the provisions of the Programme of Action into its regular programme of work and will actively participate in LDC-III, scheduled for 14-20 May 2001.

43. IFAD is also closely following the preparatory work for the high-level event on "Financing for Development", to be held in Mexico in 2002. Given the decreasing levels of official development assistance, particularly to agriculture, IFAD welcomes the opportunity to participate in this global event, which is expected to build on the undertakings of the Millennium Declaration.

44. With a view to attaining international development goals, the Fund is collaborating with national and international development partners to develop intermediate indicators of progress and assess the extent to which such goals are being met at the national and regional levels. It is hoped that the Rural Poverty Report will contribute towards gathering the knowledge needed to attain such goals. In this context, IFAD played an active role in the World Bank-sponsored Seminar on International Development Goals, held in Washington, D.C. on 19-20 March 2001.

45. In keeping with paragraph 15 of the Millennium Declaration, i.e. "... to implement the enhanced programme of debt relief for the heavily-indebted poor countries" IFAD has increased the scope and depth of the relief it provides under the Debt Initiative for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC). In 1996, the Executive Board endorsed IFAD's involvement in the Debt Initiative for HIPCs and, in 2000, the Governing Council approved the Fund's participation in the Enhanced Debt Initiative for HIPCs.

46. Finally, an increasingly necessary part of IFAD's work involves global advocacy in support of prioritizing rural development and rural poverty alleviation as a means of achieving international development goals. Despite its small size, IFAD has been able to improve its outreach and the quality and impact of its activities by working with an ever-expanding range of international partners. These include cofinanciers, international organizations, including other United Nations agencies, NGOs, civil society and, increasingly, network organizations such as the Popular Coalition, the Global Mechanism and local and regional networks.

47. While consolidating its experience through a series of field-level evaluations throughout and after project implementation, IFAD is also seeking new mechanisms to achieve common objectives such as the institutionalization of the Global Environmental Facility, the development of policies on delivery of rural financial services and focus on gender empowerment and household food security through specially developed approaches and strategies.