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**PROGRESS REPORT BY THE POPULAR COALITION TO ERADICATE
HUNGER AND POVERTY**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The progress achieved in 2002 by the Popular Coalition to Eradicate Hunger and Poverty (henceforth the Popular Coalition or the Coalition) can be attributed to interaction among the following areas of activity: partnerships; programmes; policies and practices; and positioning.
2. Achievements in 2002 reflect the Coalition's refined focus, complementary role and responsibilities relative to other organizations working on issues relating to access to land and productive resources. The Popular Coalition has evolved into a central convening mechanism for stakeholders that share the goal of empowering the rural poor by ensuring their secure access to land and productive resources. These results demonstrate that the Popular Coalition is an expanding network with facilitating capacity at the local, national, regional and international levels. Both its functions and its capacity to forge a convergence of efforts among and between civil society, intergovernmental organizations, international financial institutions (IFIs), bilateral agencies and governments are essential to bridge the organizational divides that have hindered previous efforts to improve poor rural people's access to land and resources.

II. BACKGROUND

3. The Popular Coalition is a global consortium of intergovernmental, civil-society organizations (CSOs) and bilateral institutions committed to empowering the rural poor by increasing their access to productive assets, especially land, water and common property resources, and by increasing their direct participation in decision-making processes at the local, national, regional and international levels.
4. As a specialized agency of the United Nations engaged in promoting the economic advancement of the rural poor, mainly by improving the productivity of on- and off-farm activities, IFAD has been at the forefront in supporting ways of improving poor people's access to productive assets as a means of enabling them to overcome their poverty. IFAD was instrumental in creating the Popular Coalition as a collaborative mechanism, based on a vision of a new form of equal partnership among CSOs and intergovernmental organizations. It was visionary in unifying a multi-stakeholder



constituency around the importance of land reform and access to productive assets, and is credited with putting these issues (which had become marginalized until the IFAD Conference on Hunger and Poverty in 1995) back on national and international agendas.

5. Access to assets is an important pillar of IFAD's *Rural Poverty Report 2001*. Secure access to land and productive resources is central to the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), cross-cutting to the Millennium Development Goals, integral to many programmes aimed at combating desertification, critical to building up political stability in many countries in conflict, and basic to achieving the goals of the World Food Summit's Plan of Action.

III. THE YEAR IN REVIEW

6. The essence of the Popular Coalition is partnership inasmuch as its founding principle is that ensuring secure access of the rural poor to land and productive resources calls for a combined effort on the part of communities, civil society, governments, international organizations, financial institutions and bilateral agencies. The history of access to land and resources has shown that government-led policies and programmes without the active support of civil society, and civil-society movements without the institutional and enabling support of government, have both failed. Lessons learned over the years point up the need for more effective alliances of governments and CSOs, coupled with the moral and financial support of the international community. This multi-stakeholder partnership perspective forms the core of the Popular Coalition's *modus operandi*.

A. Partnerships

Regional and National Nodes

7. With the opening of the Popular Coalition's secretariat in 1998, work went forward on designing and implementing activities with regional and national nodes of the knowledge network. This led to the establishment of working relationships with CSOs and networks in eight regions and 23 countries.

8. In February 2002, Popular Coalition partners from the Latin America and the Caribbean region met in Fortaleza, Brazil, both to exchange experiences and to participate in planning the strategic direction for the Coalition's activities in the Americas. These partners also provided regional inputs for the Coalition's strategic plan for 2003-2005.

9. The Popular Coalition's delegation to the WSSD comprised representatives of regional and national nodes from Bolivia, Egypt, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, The Philippines, South Africa and Zimbabwe. During the course of the WSSD, the various representatives furthered the strategic and programming planning process by providing inputs from other regions for inclusion in the Coalition's strategy.

10. The Brazil and South Africa meetings revealed the greater level of ownership and responsibility now being assumed by partners to achieve the overall goals of the Popular Coalition. Among other things, 2002 saw an important change in the Coalition's relationships with many of the nodes. While these nodes will continue to be country leaders for knowledge networking, in a number of cases they will become formal voting members of the Coalition and thereby take part in its governance, either through the Assembly of Members or, if elected to it, through the Coalition Council.



Intergovernmental Organizations

11. Significant progress has been made in 2002 regarding activities with intergovernmental organizations and IFIs that are partners of the Popular Coalition.

12. With IFAD, the Popular Coalition has:

- completed the four workshops foreseen under the Women's Resource Access Programme (Cambodia, India, Indonesia and Nepal);
- concluded agreements for tripartite projects in Niger and Uganda involving the Belgium Survival Fund Joint Programme (BSF.JP), IFAD and the Popular Coalition;
- worked to achieve desired IFAD and Popular Coalition outcomes from the WSSD through joint events at the Preparatory Committees held in Bali and New York and at the Summit in Johannesburg;
- contributed to IFAD position papers and publications to the Conference on Financing for Development in Mexico and assisted the Fund's internal committees with respect to policies and procedures on issues related to access to land and community empowerment; and
- involved IFAD (through its Technical Advisory Division) in the Project Approval Committee of the Community Empowerment Facility (CEF) that also comprises representatives of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and three non-governmental organization partners of the Popular Coalition.

13. With the World Bank, the Popular Coalition has:

- assisted in the review of the World Bank Land Policy. This involved arranging for (and financing) the attendance of civil-society partners of the Popular Coalition in four regional consultations in Cambodia, Hungary, Mexico and Uganda. Together with members of the secretariat, representatives of nodes also attended these consultations for the purpose of presenting position papers; describing experience on land issues; providing an informed analysis of their countries' experience with World Bank land programmes; and chairing working sessions. This provided a useful opportunity for Popular Coalition partners to contribute their views and experiences to the review of the World Bank Land Policy. The Popular Coalition invested in this process in view of the important effect that World Bank land policies could have on the actions and policies of governments. In many countries, these policies will have a determining effect on the manner in which the needs of the landless and rural poor are supported;
- agreed to undertake an impartial review of the draft report on the Land Policy review; and
- collaborated with the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development in organizing a one-day seminar on land issues during the WSSD.

14. With the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Popular Coalition has:

- concluded an agreement whereby IDB will become an official partner of the Popular Coalition; and
- collaborated in IDB's seminar on land reform, held in Brazil in conjunction with the IDB Annual Meeting.

15. With FAO, the Popular Coalition has:

- worked on several projects with the organization's Land Tenure Service, including preparation of a document entitled *A Common Platform on Access to Land*;



- collaborated with the Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development (SARD) initiative of FAO the Major Stakeholder Groups of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) on the theme of access to land, in preparation for the WSSD. The paper became the central document on this subject within the SARD initiative;
- collaborated in and partially financed an ongoing study on ways and means to mediate conflicts regarding access to land;
- presented a paper to the International Congress of Surveyors and formed a partnership with the International Federation of Surveyors to examine issues involved in protecting common property rights; and
- reviewed ways of strengthening country-level thematic groups of the United Nations System Network on Rural Development and Food Security. The network has two goals: to support both the Programme of Action of the World Food Summit and the work of the Popular Coalition.

16. Over and above these joint activities, FAO provides technical and advisory support to the Popular Coalition, particularly through its Land Tenure Service and work on sustainable agriculture and rural development initiatives.

Major Stakeholder Groups of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development

17. With the Major Stakeholder Groups, the Popular Coalition has:

- developed close working relationships and plans of action with four major stakeholder groups with collaborative status under the CSD process: farmers, trade unions (agricultural workers), women and indigenous peoples;
- involved the major stakeholder groups in the preparation of *A Common Platform on Access to Land*; and
- worked on specific initiatives with the groups, including the launching of two projects with the trade union movement (IUF) on the land rights of plantation workers (Central America and Uganda); with the International Federation of Agricultural Producers at the World Farmers' Congress in Cairo, Egypt, and through the CEF; with the Women's Caucus of the CSD in coordinating an advocacy and lobbying campaign on women's rights to land (which led to supporting language in the WSSD implementation document); and with indigenous peoples in support of their advocacy work and to determine the possibility for synergistic actions.

Governments, CSOs and International Organizations

18. With countries, the Popular Coalition has:

- developed the concept and operational framework for establishing country-level LAND Partnerships (Land Alliances for National Development); and,
- launched the LAND Partnership Programme: Indonesia and The Philippines were the first countries to announce their intention to establish such a programme. Others have now indicated their intention to establish LAND Partnerships in their countries.

B. Programmes

Knowledge Network on Agrarian Reform

19. The Knowledge Network on Agrarian Reform (ARnet) is a core programme of the Popular Coalition. The first phase established a network of eight regional and 23 national nodes. The overall



goal of ARnet is to identify, document and share knowledge on practical ways in which CSOs can help increase the rural poor's access to land and other productive resources. The lessons that CSOs have learned and the methodologies they have employed are not easily available to other CSOs or available in a form that encourages their replication and scaling up. However, such knowledge could contribute directly to international debates and, in particular, to a deeper understanding of the contribution that CSOs can make to increasing the rural poor's access to land and other productive resources.

20. Following an assessment of ARnet by the Coalition secretariat and with input from the nodes, it was decided to sharpen the focus on its two distinctive components: knowledge and networking.

21. The Knowledge Programme provides support to capture lessons learned and successful methodologies from relevant CSO activities aimed at improving poor rural people's access to land and resources. This involves providing support and funding to create a knowledge document that reconstructs the CSOs' experience (what, why, when, where, how); critically analyses the experience; and prepares it in a form (publication, electronic, etc.) that will allow it to be effectively and efficiently shared within and among countries.

22. The objective of the Network Support Programme (NSP) is to help build up or strengthen networks of CSOs at the country level so that they may identify their common agenda and working methods, and implement plans of action. The NSP aims to assist and link otherwise disparate civil-society/community-based organizations to pursue their needs from a position of collective strength based on a united strategy for improving their members' access to land and related productive resources. Among other things, it is expected that an organized network will be better able to establish fora for dialogue, a voice into policy formulation and a way for communities to be educated on pertinent issues so they can influence local decision-making from an informed point of view.

23. Areas of knowledge emerging from the Knowledge Network include:

- Bangladesh, Bolivia and Ecuador: reinforcing the legal rights of marginal communities;
- Cameroon: establishing a national association to defend the land rights of small farmers;
- India and Mozambique: raising land literacy at the community level by educating marginalized groups on their land rights;
- Indonesia and Peru: developing data bases and other Internet-based resources for strengthening community land claims;
- Nepal: developing methods for assessing the sustainability of community-based institutions;
- The Philippines: using the media to effectively draw attention to community land claims; and
- South Africa: organizing audits of the skills of civil-society network members.

24. As mentioned earlier, the nodes convened on several occasions in 2002 in order to share information on their activities and describe their experience in important global debates (including meetings of World Bank, IDB and the WSSD).

25. In 2002, support was provided for the strengthening of the Landless Peoples' Movement of South Africa, in line with the NSP. Furthermore, in terms of knowledge, support was provided for a knowledge exchange programme on lessons learned through land reform programmes and initiatives in Africa.

26. The work of the Knowledge Network on Agrarian Reform has, in large measure, been supported by the Government of Italy through the Italian Supplementary Funds managed by IFAD.



Capacity Building – Community Empowerment Facility

27. The CEF aims to strengthen the capacity of the rural poor and their representative organizations to negotiate their access to land and related productive factors and to resolve related conflicts.

28. Progress reports on projects approved in 2001 show promising results. Ongoing projects include:

- Albania: support for direct community participation in obtaining access to state forest land, as provided for under the recent Land Law;
- Bolivia: development of a plan to improve the livelihoods of indigenous people through sustainable management of land and forests;
- Ecuador: regularization of communal land, ensuring equitable access to water and a rational plan for its use by indigenous people;
- Guatemala: support to land conflict resolution by indigenous people in the frame of the post-peace agreement;
- India (Uttar Pradesh): technical support to fishermen to help them retain their control over the fishing area (won after a long and difficult encounter with the state);
- Madagascar: support for an information campaign on resource rights and community development strategies for sustainable management of local resources: water, land, technologies and markets;
- Malawi: strengthening of women's opportunities through access to land and markets;
- Nicaragua: establishment of a revolving fund for land titling and legalization;
- The Philippines: support for a national campaign by citizen's organizations to influence the future of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Programme;
- The Philippines: support for community participation in local decision-making at the municipal level on people's property rights;
- Southern Africa region: support for the start-up of the activities of the Southern African Natural Products Trade Association, which seeks to empower poor rural communities in Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe by creating opportunities for them to derive income from local natural products on national, regional and international markets;
- Uganda: support to land literacy to raise farmer leaders' awareness of the Uganda Land Act of 1998; and
- Zimbabwe: setting up of a series of pilot projects to address key issues affecting agricultural productivity and environmental performance in resettlement schemes.

29. During the course of 2002, the Popular Coalition has assessed 52 concept papers requesting CEF support. Twenty-one organizations were subsequently invited to submit full proposals, and 13 were received by the deadline of 30 September. Before the end of the year, the Project Approval Committee will 'meet electronically' to decide on the projects to be funded in 2003.

30. The CEF is supported by funding from the World Bank and IFAD. The funds available are limited in relation to the potential of the programme.

Women's Resource Access Programme

31. The Women's Resource Access Programme (WRAP) is a specialized programme of the Popular Coalition. It was developed in 2001 to raise international understanding of the need to improve women's resource rights. Through small, village-based discussions/workshops, WRAP directly captures and shares knowledge, experience and views of poor rural women on the importance of land and the obstacles/social practices that prevent them having access to it, thereby adding to their impoverishment in the event their family status changes.



32. In 2002, the Popular Coalition published and disseminated the results of WRAP workshops held in India and Nepal in 2001. It also held workshops in Indonesia (February 2002) and Cambodia (October 2002), the results of which are now available. Thanks to these community workshops, the Popular Coalition has been able to develop the WRAP methodology, which is now being published to help other organizations to engage at the village-level and thereby give direct voice, visibility and influence to the viewpoints of women and other marginalized groups.

33. A funding proposal to introduce WRAP into other geographical regions has been prepared in close consultation with IFAD Country Portfolio Managers for countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. Donors are being invited to become partners in the proposed programme. Information on the WRAP experience has been disseminated worldwide, and was well received at the WSSD and by leaders of the Women's Caucus.

34. To date, WRAP has been supported by a grant from Japanese Supplementary Funds managed by IFAD.

Belgium Survival Fund Joint Programme (BSF.JP)

35. The Government of Belgium was an important contributor to the establishment of the Popular Coalition inasmuch as it was a major supporter of the founding conference in Brussels in 1995. Belgium has a clear interest in finding ways and means of incorporating access to land and resources-related issues more fully into its projects in Africa.

36. In 2002, an agreement was reached between BSF.JP, IFAD and the Popular Coalition to bring the latter's work into two country programmes as a way of testing the incorporation of land issues into the joint BSF/IFAD work. The countries identified thus far are Niger and Uganda. The projects will be prepared by the end of 2002 and should start up in early 2003.

C. Policies and Practices

37. The Popular Coalition was founded on the premise that in order for the rural poor to gain secure access to resources, their interests must be provided for in the legislative and regulatory frameworks of their governments. Accordingly, an important indicator for monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of Popular Coalition activities will be for its member organizations to change their policies and practices to incorporate the lessons learned from participating in and supporting joint activities with the Coalition.

38. The information provided in the foregoing sections on partnership and programmes describes the numerous activities which, in 2002, helped Coalition partners to learn from one another. It also outlines the numerous forms and fora through which the lessons of partners have been brought to bear on public policies and for the building of consensus on issues of access to land.

39. Furthermore, in 2002, the Popular Coalition entered into an agreement with the Agricultural Workers' Unions of IUF in order to better understand, and place on national and international agendas, the constraints facing plantation workers with regard to land and other productive resources. The aim was also to ensure that these issues would be taken into consideration in the programmes, policies and activities of the Popular Coalition. Work has already started on projects dealing with these issues in Central America and Uganda (see paragraph 17).



A Common Platform on Access to Land

40. Creating the enabling conditions to serve the land and resource needs of the rural poor is at the heart of the Popular Coalition's mandate. This work crossed an important new threshold in 2002 through the wide support of many organizations for the Coalition's land-issues paper entitled *A Common Platform on Access to Land*, which evolved from its paper entitled *The Land Poor - Essential Partners for the Sustainable Management of Land Resources* that was prepared in 1999. The Platform referred to is a sign of expanding global consensus on the need to address the land and asset needs of poor rural households. During the three-year period that elapsed between the two papers, the Popular Coalition embarked on a process of global consensus-building to seek a greater common agreement on land issues. The Platform document, which is the result of consultations with the many partners listed in the Partnership section of this report, has not only provided a better starting point for programmes and policies but has also reaffirmed the international convening role of the Popular Coalition. It thus becomes a central instrument for the Popular Coalition and its partners to foster enabling public policies and supportive land programmes within countries. It also seeks wider endorsement and comments for regular updating of the paper to reflect further levels of consensus and commitment on the part of partners.

41. **LAND Partnerships.** Addressing the land needs of the rural poor is a national and local activity. All other actions and lessons from regional and global levels can encourage, inform and assist countries to examine the ways forward that may best serve their particular circumstances. The programmes described above contribute to the achievement of this objective. LAND Partnerships were launched in 2002 as a new tool to help countries establish participatory stakeholder fora for land issues. LAND Partnerships further country-level collaboration between the state, civil society, and bilateral and international actors to improve policy formulation; to engage in joint action programmes; and provide a space in which to resolve land conflicts. The Governments of Indonesia and The Philippines were the first two countries to formally announce their intention to establish LAND Partnerships, and others are about to do so.

D. Positioning

42. The results that have been described in this report have had the collective effect of positioning the Popular Coalition as a global convening mechanism for land issues. While land issues are of central importance to many other organizations, from CSOs to international organizations, not to mention governments, the Popular Coalition is a neutral convening body that seeks to build up consensus but with no particular policy, programme prescription or technology. The challenges and political sensitivities of land issues make it imperative that there should be a neutral convening mechanism. The convening, mediating and negotiating roles of this mechanism are important to Popular Coalition partners. Even though, in many cases, these partners are among the most knowledgeable organizations with regard to details and technologies needed to improve land access and land-use systems, they see the role of the Popular Coalition as one of significant value. The members and partners recognize the Popular Coalition's niche in creating the climate and conditions to frame policy development and programme alliances from the local to global levels. It can be said that the Popular Coalition is an 'International Land Coalition'.

IV. THE POPULAR COALITION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO IFAD

43. The foundation of the Popular Coalition is recognized by all its partners to have grown out of the vision of IFAD along with IFAD's steadfast commitment to and investment in the building of the Coalition. These same partners accept responsibility for building the Popular Coalition and generating the resources needed for its operations. Accordingly, while housed inside IFAD, the Popular Coalition and its Secretariat function under the direction of a Coalition Steering Committee, currently involving



IFAD along with the European Commission, FAO, World Bank, World Food Programme and seven regionally-based CSOs.

44. An assembly of the Popular Coalition's members will be convened in February 2003. At that time, the Coalition's Executive Council will be established, thereby activating and implementing roles and responsibilities for its governance, as set forth in the Basic Framework Regarding the Modalities for and Administrative Operations of the Popular Coalition in its Relationship to IFAD.

V. CONCLUSION

45. Within the Popular Coalition, IFAD can accurately be described as the 'first among equals'. The other partners recognize and respect that IFAD provided the framework and capacity for the Popular Coalition to flourish. By doing so it created widespread alliances with others that joined the initial call by the Fund to empower the rural poor through land reform and access to productive resources.

46. Land issues touch on fundamental issues of power within societies. These are not easy issues. The leadership and support of IFAD in helping the Popular Coalition to champion them reflects IFAD's willingness to stand with the poor in facing their challenges in gaining access to land and to enable them to overcome their poverty.