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**IFAD**  
**INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**  
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**PRESIDENT’S REPORT ON THE**  
**EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL LAND COALITION**

**For: Information**

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## **Note to Executive Board Directors**

This document is submitted for the information of the Executive Board.

To make the best use of time available at Executive Board sessions, Directors are invited to contact the following focal point with any questions relating to IFAD's project/programme pipeline before the session.

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## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT ON THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL LAND COALITION**

### **I. THE INTERNATIONAL LAND COALITION AND THE CONTEXT OF ITS EXTERNAL EVALUATION**

1. The Popular Coalition to Eradicate Hunger and Poverty was established as a result of the Conference on Hunger and Poverty convened by IFAD in Brussels in November 1995. In view of the Conference's emphasis on the need to build strategic alliances among diverse development organizations to improve the access by the rural poor to natural resources, especially land, IFAD agreed to host the Coalition. In 1996, IFAD's Executive Board approved a grant to establish and develop the Coalition. In July 1998, the Coalition Secretariat was established within IFAD, but as a separate entity. The Coalition was constituted as the International Land Coalition in February 2003 with the first meetings of its Assembly of Members and the Coalition Council.

2. The mission of the Land Coalition is to work together with rural poor men and women to increase their secure access to natural resources, especially land, and to enable them to participate – at the local, national, regional and international levels – in the policy and decision-making processes that affect their livelihoods.

3. The Land Coalition is an institution of members that operates within a governance framework. The Coalition has 36 voting members (27 civil society organizations and 9 intergovernmental organizations) and 100 non-voting partners in 43 countries. It is governed by an Assembly of Members that meets every two years and a 14-member Coalition Council that meets twice a year. Its activities are coordinated by a permanent Secretariat housed at IFAD headquarters in Rome.

4. As the host organization and a major source of funds for the Land Coalition, IFAD has long recognized the strategic importance of land issues in combating rural poverty. Access to productive resources has been identified as a key element of IFAD's Strategic Framework.<sup>1</sup> The mission of the Land Coalition is therefore of significant relevance to IFAD.

5. Since 1996, IFAD has provided 11 technical assistance grants to the Land Coalition for a total of US\$7.2 million. In 2004, the Executive Board approved a grant of US\$1,865,000 for a period ending 31 December 2006. In obtaining approval for the release of the second tranche of the grant, IFAD management committed to undertake a full independent evaluation of the International Land Coalition<sup>2</sup> in keeping with the new IFAD Policy for Grant Financing approved by the Board in 2003.<sup>3</sup>

### **II. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES, PROCESSES AND GOVERNANCE**

6. The main purpose of the evaluation was to provide IFAD with an independent review of the Coalition's progress in fulfilling its mission and objectives. It is also intended to inform the Coalition Council about the Land Coalition's institutional and programmatic progress. The evaluators were asked to identify lessons that have been learned from past experience and to make recommendations to improve the future performance of the Coalition.

7. To ensure the independent nature of the exercise, IFAD management commissioned an external agency to undertake the evaluation. In line with IFAD's procurement process, a consulting firm – Universalia – was selected. Subsequently, an Interdepartmental Steering Committee, headed by a

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<sup>1</sup> Strategic Framework for IFAD, 2002-2006 – Enabling the Rural Poor to Overcome their Poverty, IFAD 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Verbatim of the Eighty-fourth Session of the Executive Board, Agenda Item 11, April 2005.

<sup>3</sup> IFAD Policy for Grant Financing (documents EB 2003/80/R.5/Rev.1 and EB 2003/80/C.R.P.1). As with other recipients of IFAD grants, future grants to the Land Coalition are to be governed by this policy.

divisional director with substantial experience in independent evaluations, was selected to provide guidance to the evaluation team and ensure achievement of the objectives of the evaluation (see annex).

8. The outputs of the external evaluation consist of an inception report, a mid-term progress report, a draft evaluation report and a final evaluation report. The draft report was shared with the Land Coalition and within IFAD, and comments were provided.

### III. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY AND FRAMEWORK

9. With input from IFAD and the Land Coalition, the evaluation team developed a detailed methodology and framework for the evaluation, which were approved by the Steering Committee.

10. Three main sources of data were used for the external evaluation: people, documents and site visits. Approximately 120 individuals representing some 23 member organizations, 32 partner organizations, and other land-related institutions were consulted using semi-structured face-to-face and telephone interviews, group interviews, observations, e-mail correspondence, and/or reflective sessions and surveys. The evaluation team also reviewed Land Coalition and IFAD documentation, in addition to relevant literature on land reform and coalitions. Site visits were conducted to the Land Coalition and IFAD offices in Rome and to seven countries in Africa and Latin America. Similarly, four case studies focusing on Land Coalition activities with the European Commission, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, IFAD and the World Bank were developed.

### IV. KEY FINDINGS

11. The key findings of the external evaluation are presented in the following paragraphs.<sup>4</sup>

#### Relevance

12. The mission and objectives of the Land Coalition were found to be congruent with emerging global interest in land reform and highly relevant to both regional and local needs. The Coalition has not yet included some important and increasingly powerful social movements in its global alliance and this could undermine the Coalition's relevance in the future. This weakness is explained mainly by the current structure of the membership.

#### Effectiveness

13. In terms of the effectiveness of the Land Coalition, the key findings are as follows:

- (a) Most of the Coalition's civil society organization members and partners feel that the Coalition is working successfully towards its mission and objectives, but opinions vary among intergovernmental organization members and partners, and range from positive to very negative.
- (b) Of the six strategic thrusts identified by the Land Coalition in its strategic framework, it has been most effective in creating spaces for dialogue and advocacy, and in documenting and sharing knowledge. It has been least effective in coalition-building.
- (c) The Coalition's six programme support areas form the key structure for most of its activities and related budgeting. Programmes such as the community empowerment facility, knowledge programme, and network support programme contribute considerably

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<sup>4</sup> The findings and recommendations presented in this report have been summarized from the evaluation report submitted by Universalis and as such do not imply acceptance or non-acceptance by IFAD management. The evaluation report in full will be posted on the restricted site for the Executive Board.

to the Coalition's public visibility. Stakeholders broadly acknowledge the success of the Land Coalition's individual programmes, in particular the community empowerment facility, but agree that the Coalition's programming should become more strategic to ensure more systematic links among its programme areas and to make best use of its resources.

- (d) The Coalition has been only moderately successful in addressing the gender dimensions of land reform in its programming. A strategy for linking experiences in gender and land issues to all programming areas is, however, under development.
- (e) While opinions vary considerably on the degree to which the Land Coalition has been able to enhance IFAD's capacity to achieve its strategic objectives to date, the Land Coalition has considerable potential to make a significant contribution.

### Efficiency

14. The Coalition's efficiency has been analysed from a number of perspectives. How well it is **strategically managing** itself is one such consideration. On this point, the external evaluation has concluded the following:

- (a) The Land Coalition is not legally constituted as an organization through a legal document such as a charter or letter of incorporation.
- (b) The Land Coalition has several unique characteristics and some important comparative advantages, but it has yet to develop a distinct, recognized and appropriately resourced role. Overall, the Land Coalition is taking on too many roles given its limited financial and human resources.
- (c) The Land Coalition has taken some major steps towards managing itself more strategically but it needs to do more to overcome some of the serious challenges it faces. Secretariat staff and members are aware of the limitations of the current strategic framework and related processes and are planning to address these limitations when developing a new framework for 2007.
- (d) The Coalition lacks comprehensive systems for regular feedback and supervision, and for monitoring and evaluating of its progress at the programme and institutional levels. The Coalition needs to develop tools and frameworks to capture both its intended results and its progress towards these results, not only at the activity and output level, but also at the outcome level.

15. **The Land Coalition's relationship with IFAD.** Evaluation findings assert that as the Coalition's host for the past decade, IFAD has played a critically important role in the Land Coalition's founding and continued existence. Its multifaceted role as a host, member, donor and partner however has overshadowed its other relationships with the Coalition, and may be preventing both the Land Coalition and IFAD from building on the potential benefits of IFAD as a member of the Coalition. In addition, internal changes within IFAD (e.g. in grant policy, corporate strategy and human resources policy) have significant and immediate implications for the future growth and development of the Coalition.

16. **Governance, membership and structure.** There are some inconsistencies that need to be addressed, for instance in the election process of the Assembly of Members, the roles and responsibilities of the co-chairs of the Coalition Council and the membership guidelines of the Coalition Council.

- (a) The Land Coalition has a relatively limited number of members, given its large potential constituency and its stated intention to be a global coalition. The Coalition needs to clarify its plans and strategies for membership growth, and it has started work on developing clearer membership criteria and selection processes.
- (b) Until now the Land Coalition has been a centralized organization, driven more by the Coalition Secretariat and IFAD than by its members. The Coalition needs to become more member-driven and increase interaction among its members.

17. **Programme management.** The Land Coalition has processes in place to plan and guide its ongoing projects and activities, but not its programmes. In addition, existing processes differ in their degree of systematization and transparency and there is no joint, coherent monitoring approach. In light of this, the Coalition needs to consider shifting from activity-focused approaches towards programme-based approaches to planning, management, reporting and evaluation.

18. Regarding the Land Coalition/IFAD relationship and inter-organizational partnerships:

- (a) As sufficiently clear and objective conditions were not set to monitor and assess the relationship between the Coalition and IFAD, there are mixed expectations and levels of satisfaction by IFAD staff vis-à-vis Land Coalition services and performance. The external evaluation concluded that the Coalition could be quite relevant to IFAD objectives.
- (b) The Land Coalition manages its human resources and finances in keeping with IFAD policies and procedures. This has several important short-term benefits but also some longer-term disadvantages.
- (c) Intergovernmental organization members and partners have engaged in many successful joint activities with the Land Coalition that have supported their own mandates and helped them reach out to civil society organizations. However, as several of the Land Coalition's intergovernmental organization members and partners have recently established relationships with other bodies/forums that will give them access to civil society organizations and grass-roots movements (e.g. the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO] and the International Poverty Centre of the United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], IFAD and the Farmers' Forum), some stakeholders now question the Land Coalition's future value added to these intergovernmental organizations.

19. With respect to the mobilization and management of resources:

- (a) While Secretariat staff are highly regarded by most partners and members, there are differing opinions about the importance of expertise in the area of land reform on the part of Land Coalition staff. IFAD operational staff members feel that Land Coalition staff lack needed skills in technical areas. Other Land Coalition members see facilitation and communication skills as the most relevant in the Secretariat.
- (b) While the Coalition increased the contributions it receives from other donors in 2006, it continues to be very dependent on IFAD for financial support, which poses risks to both organizations. So far, the Land Coalition has relied on ad hoc approaches to mobilizing resources and has not yet developed a resource strategy.
- (c) The Coalition's existing business model does not link revenues to the products and services it provides, and is not adequately developed to achieve long-term sustainability.

20. **Communications.** Civil society organization members and partners highly value the effective interpersonal and professional communication characteristic of the Secretariat. However, the Secretariat only marginally addresses the question of how to strengthen interaction among members and partners at the national or regional level.

21. **Value for money.** Proxy measures suggest that the Land Coalition provides its investors with reasonable value for money, but institutional hosting arrangements with IFAD and organizational use of members' expertise have limited its longer-term effects.

22. To sum up, the Land Coalition's continued existence is due, in large part, to the increasing relevance of its mission and objectives. Despite its relatively modest human and financial resources, the Coalition set a very ambitious agenda for itself and stakeholders' expectations are high and wide-ranging. As a result, the Land Coalition is having some difficulty in living up to these expectations. The Coalition is still a relatively small entity in the early stages of growth and there is a significant gap between its expressed aims and its concrete actions or even its capacity to achieve such aims. Overall, its mission and objectives are very relevant, but there are concerns about its long-term organizational viability, effectiveness and efficiency. These are not insurmountable problems, neither are they unusual in a relatively new organization. However, they require immediate attention.

## V. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. Recommendations to the International Land Coalition

23. In the light of the findings summarized above, the external evaluation concluded that Land Coalition stakeholders, particularly the Coalition Council, need to take several important decisions. These are grouped under four headings.

#### **ILC's Transition to a Viable Corporate Entity**

24. The Coalition Council should take immediate steps to establish the Land Coalition's legal identity and reduce its over-dependence on IFAD's continued financial and administrative support, which can be problematic, especially in the light of the restriction on self-granting under IFAD's new grant policy.

25. The Land Coalition – under the leadership of the Coalition Council – should develop a strategy to make the transition from an IFAD-hosted institution to an independent entity with international status. This should include a costed plan with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and a schedule. The strategy should also include measures to wean the Land Coalition away from IFAD's management systems. Some changes in organizational culture among Land Coalition staff and members will also be necessary, particularly in terms of managing for results, becoming more member-driven, and adopting a more entrepreneurial approach to resource mobilization. Finally, in order to retain its international status, the Coalition will need to define a clear strategy and plan of action and garner support from its members, particularly IFAD, to assist in realizing this objective.

#### **Membership and Governance of the Land Coalition**

26. The roles and responsibilities of Land Coalition members, of the Coalition Council, and of Land Coalition committees should be clarified and amended to reflect the Coalition's legal identity and measures should also be taken to encourage and support the active involvement of members in the governance, strategic management and programming of the Coalition. The membership and governance matters that require definition, clarification and/or amendment are:

- (a) membership criteria, obligations and benefits;

- (b) objectives and strategies in terms of membership growth, including linkages with social movements;
- (c) the rationale, costs and benefits of continuing to provide special membership status to certain members;
- (d) roles and responsibilities of Land Coalition bodies (e.g. the Assembly of Members, the Coalition Council and Coalition committees) particularly as they relate to accountability within the Land Coalition and to the current role of the host; and
- (e) development of more formal agreements between the Land Coalition and individual members.

27. In addition, the Land Coalition should take the necessary measures to encourage and support members to play a more active role in governance, strategic management and programming in the future. This might include decentralizing some of its programmes and operations to regions and/or creating new ways for members to participate in the organization, for example through Board committees.

### **Strategic Management and Programming Strategy**

28. The Coalition Council should clarify the role of the Land Coalition, develop a programming strategy and manage the Coalition strategically. The Coalition has several unique characteristics and some important comparative advantages, but it has not yet transformed these into a distinct, recognized and appropriately resourced niche. Furthermore, the Land Coalition does not have a programming framework, and this would help it to operationalize such a niche. Assuming that the Coalition becomes a legal entity, several strategic and programming management matters require attention:

- (a) defining the role and programme areas of the Land Coalition in a clearer, more focused and integrated way;
- (b) refining the objectives so that they capture the essence of the Coalition and become more specific, measurable, clear and relevant;
- (c) ensuring that the mission statement, objectives and programme areas are aligned;
- (d) defining results and indicators at the corporate and programming levels, and developing ways to monitor and evaluate progress towards results;
- (e) developing a strategic business plan to guide and report on the progress of the Coalition to stakeholders;
- (f) aligning programmes and activities with human and financial resources;
- (g) communicating consistent and clear messages about the Land Coalition to audiences; and
- (h) identifying and utilizing measures to support cultural changes within the Land Coalition that are results-oriented and focused.

### **Mobilization of Resources**

29. In mobilizing resources to increase the financial viability of the Land Coalition, the Coalition Council should define a business model that links revenues to the potential services and products that

can be provided. Assuming that the Land Coalition becomes a legal entity, the following resource mobilization issues need to be addressed:

- (a) clarification of the Land Coalition's business model;
- (b) development of comprehensive and adequately resourced resource mobilization strategies that include clear plans and a definition of the responsibilities of staff and members;
- (c) development, enhancement and clarification of strategic partnerships with social movements, intergovernmental organizations, universities, international NGOs, etc.

### **B. Recommendations to IFAD**

30. The external evaluation has made following recommendations to IFAD.

31. IFAD is a founding member and long-time supporter of the Land Coalition. Therefore, if it is satisfied with the Coalition's responses to the evaluation recommendations (in particular with reference to the four recommendations mentioned in paragraphs 23-29), and if requested by the Coalition Council to do so, IFAD should:

- (a) assist the Land Coalition, as appropriate, in maintaining the international status that the Coalition has attained as a result of its association with IFAD;
- (b) support the Coalition's institutional development, including the process to become a legal entity, and assist in developing the Coalition's capacities; and
- (c) continue as transitional host to the Land Coalition, providing institutional and financial support for a fixed period of time (no longer than five years) with a clear phase-out plan, objectives, milestones and reporting requirements to be monitored by an explicitly designated body within IFAD.

32. With respect to its relationship with the Land Coalition, IFAD should clarify the various roles it plays:

- (a) **As a programme partner.** If both parties are interested in a future relationship, they should define mutually agreed results-based objectives. They should also jointly develop multi-year and/or annual plans, and a strategy to monitor expected results over time;
- (b) **As a member.** Based on the Land Coalition's responses to the evaluation, IFAD's membership of the Coalition should be validated by ascertaining the value of the membership and the division(s) that would best represent IFAD in the Coalition.
- (c) **As a donor.** Based on responses to the evaluation by the Land Coalition, IFAD should determine the rationale, nature and amount of future support to the Coalition.

33. **If not satisfied with the Land Coalition's responses to this evaluation,** IFAD should negotiate a phase-out strategy with Coalition members.

### **VI. NEXT STEPS**

34. In its initial response to the draft evaluation report, the Coalition has communicated that the report is a fair and generally balanced assessment. The Land Coalition considers the report to have gone beyond being an evaluation in relation to the most recent grant from IFAD, to providing a helpful institutional assessment and source of advice on how future performance can be improved. The Coalition has also stated that both its governing Coalition Council and its management have

agreed to submit a time-bound plan of action that will fully implement the key recommendations made by the external evaluation. Furthermore, the plan of action will respond to other findings and elements in the report that the Coalition intends to take into consideration when developing its strategic framework and programme of work for 2007-2009.

35. In line with the recommendations of the external evaluation and the response received from the Coalition Council, IFAD management will review the plan of action submitted by the Land Coalition. It will also review the role and relevance of the Coalition in relation to IFAD's future operations and strategic objectives. If such review concludes that the Land Coalition is relevant to IFAD's strategic objectives and future operations and that the plan of action submitted by the Land Coalition is responsive to the recommendations of the evaluation, IFAD will prepare a grant proposal for submission to the Executive Board in December 2006 for the future financing of the Land Coalition. The financing plan will set clear milestones and specify the level of tranches attached to these milestones.

36. In the event that the plan of action is considered unsatisfactory by IFAD management, or that the relationship of the Land Coalition with IFAD is considered to be in need of substantial changes, IFAD will negotiate a strategy for modifying its various relationships with the Land Coalition (e.g. as a donor and host), including a possible phase-out.

## ANNEX

**TERMS OF REFERENCE AND COMPOSITION OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE****Terms of Reference**

The Steering Committee provides guidance to the evaluation team and ensures that the objectives of the evaluation are realized, without being directly concerned or involved with the management of the evaluation team. To this end, the Steering Committee will review the reports produced by the evaluation team and provide timely comments and suggestions to ensure that the final report is of a high standard.

**Composition**

Ms Mona Bishay, Director, Near East and North Africa Division, Chair

Mr Perin Saint Ange, Senior Loan Officer, Finance and Administration Division, Member

Mr Shyam Khadka, Senior Portfolio Manager, Programme Management Department, Member