

Document:	<u>EB 2007/91/R.42</u>
Agenda:	<u>15(b)</u>
Date:	<u>7 August 2007</u>
Distribution:	<u>Public</u>
Original:	<u>English</u>

E



Enabling the rural poor
to overcome poverty

IFAD's 2009 publication on rural poverty

Executive Board — Ninety-first Session
Rome, 11-12 September 2007

For: **Information**

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 points with any technical questions about this document before the session:

Jean-Philippe Audinet

Acting Director, Policy Division
telephone: +39 06 5459 2305
e-mail: j.audinet@ifad.org

Sappho Haralambous

Policy Coordinator, Policy Division
telephone: +39 06 5459 2238
e-mail: s.haralambous@ifad.org

Queries regarding the dispatch of documentation for this session should be addressed to:

Deirdre McGrenra

Governing Bodies Officer
telephone: +39 06 5459 2374
e-mail: d.mcgrenra@ifad.org

IFAD's 2009 publication on rural poverty

I. Background and objective

1. IFAD released its last rural poverty report in 2001,¹ when the Millennium Development Goals had just been launched as a framework for achieving poverty reduction. More than five years later, and midway to the target date (2015) for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, IFAD will take stock of achievements so far and assess persisting and new challenges facing rural poor people.
2. The world is confronted today with an array of natural and man-made challenges, ranging from conflicts and vulnerability to climate change and increased natural disasters. These challenges are of unprecedented magnitude and give reason to believe that the world's future is being compromised. They will magnify the vulnerability of already vulnerable poor populations in developing countries, the majority of whom live and will continue to live in rural communities with high levels of poverty – communities that depend heavily on agriculture for their livelihoods.
3. How will rural people in the developing world face up to the challenges? How do we develop effective responses to old and new challenges so that rural poverty is reduced and rural livelihoods are enhanced and secured? The 2009 publication on rural poverty does not presume to provide all the answers. It will present an analysis of the current situation and possible ways forward as a basis for dialogue at all levels, with the objective of putting rural poor populations at centre stage in development efforts.

II. Key message

4. Drawing on past experiences and considering the state of global rural poverty, the 2009 publication on rural poverty will demonstrate that rural poverty reduction is possible and is actually happening. It is happening when and where people are empowered and conducive environments are created for sustainable development through appropriate policies and investment incentives. Empowerment, building capacities and expanding the capabilities of the rural poor and their institutions, in a more enabling environment, will emerge as the major factors that distinguish effective and sustainable responses to the poverty challenges of today and as a condition for successful responses to the challenges of tomorrow.

III. Main features

5. The 2009 publication on rural poverty will draw on IFAD's field experience and that of its partners to present some of the most innovative and promising responses to the challenges of rural poverty reduction and rural development. In so doing, it will give the Fund the opportunity to further systematize its experience and thus enhance its knowledge management capabilities. It is in its aspect of improving learning from development practice that the publication is timely and needed. The 2009 publication on rural poverty will also build on and complement recent major endeavours to address rural and agricultural development, most importantly in the World Development Report 2008: Agriculture for Development, to be launched on 19 October 2007.
6. The publication will be guided by the IFAD Strategic Framework 2007-2010² and its principles of engagement³ in two ways: (i) focusing on enhanced access of rural

¹ *Rural Poverty Report 2001 – The Challenge of Ending Rural Poverty.*

² Strategic objectives: rural poor women and men have enhanced access to and have developed the skills and organization they require to take advantage of: (i) natural resources (land and water); (ii) improved agricultural technologies and production services; (iii) a broad range of financial services; (iv) transparent and competitive agricultural input and produce markets; (v) opportunities for rural off-farm employment and enterprise development; and (vi) local and national policy and programming processes.

³ Principles of engagement: (i) selectivity and focus; (ii) targeting; (iii) empowering rural poor people; (iv) innovation, learning and scaling up; (v) effective partnerships; and (vi) sustainability.

poor women and men to assets, services and opportunities; and (ii) strengthening their skills and organization to enable them to use and benefit from the enhanced access.

7. Referring back to the key message, fundamental issues that the 2009 publication on rural poverty will emphasize are the empowerment and capacity-building of poor people for agricultural and rural development. These are the cornerstones of IFAD's approach to rural poverty reduction. However, the publication will not be about IFAD, but about the people it works with and their experiences. It will provide insights into how smallholders are responding to social and economic change.
8. The publication will serve as a platform for other partner organizations to contribute their knowledge and field experience, for example the Food and Agriculture Organization, International Food Policy Research Institute, World Food Programme, civil society organizations, national research institutes and farmers' organizations. Emphasis will be given to the voices of the poor through consultation with various IFAD stakeholders.

IV. The process

9. To fully explore multi-stakeholder approaches and the diversity of the rural development spectrum, the 2009 publication on rural poverty must be open to the views of the rural actors themselves. The Farmers' Forum, the regional networks of IFAD-funded projects, engagement with organizations of indigenous peoples and with members of the International Land Coalition, as well as with rural women's associations, will directly contribute to forming the contents of the publication.
10. Selected representatives of academia, the political world, the agricultural research and development institutions and key partner international and pro-poor institutions will contribute to the publication through the sharing of their experience and high-level papers on key issues.

V. Outcomes

11. RP 2009 will be more than "just another report". It will be about rural poor people and their experiences in dealing with the complex issues of today, providing insights into how they are responding to old and new challenges.
12. The publication will provide a context for debate, leading to more-forward-looking and responsive policies and a shared understanding of and commitment to action. The results of the multi-stakeholder consultations will stimulate analysis of assumptions and assessments of whether development action is on the right track to face future challenges. It will encourage new thinking towards continued and systematic dialogue at all levels, with the active engagement of the rural poor, who are custodians of some of the largest tracts of the world's natural assets, and on which they depend for their livelihood today and in the future.

VI. Timing, coordination and resources

13. IFAD will take the opportunity of its thirtieth anniversary to publish and launch the 2009 publication on rural poverty at the end of the anniversary period in February 2009.
14. Oversight of production is the responsibility of the IFAD Vice-President. The Policy Division provides technical and logistical coordination.
15. The cost of the publication will be covered by the administrative budget of the Policy Division and by the mobilization of supplementary funds.

