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Enabling poor rural people  
to overcome poverty

## **2007 Progress Report on the Operations and Institutional Change Agenda of the International Land Coalition**

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For: **Information**

## **Note to Executive Board Directors**

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**Bruce Moore**

Director, International Land Coalition

telephone: +39 06 5459 2206

e-mail: [b.moore@ifad.org](mailto:b.moore@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](mailto:d.mcgrenra@ifad.org)

# 2007 Progress Report on the Operations and Institutional Change Agenda of the International Land Coalition

## I. Introduction

1. The International Land Coalition (ILC) is a global alliance of civil society and intergovernmental organizations working together to promote secure and equitable access to and control over land for poor women and men through advocacy, dialogue and capacity-building.
2. After playing a role in returning secure land access to global development agendas following its formation in 1995, ILC is now at a key transition point. An independent evaluation conducted in 2006 confirmed ILC's relevance within the growing community of institutions working on land tenure and resource rights. It also noted that ILC needs to change its operating modalities and take a more focused, targeted approach to its work – setting goals and objectives based on its comparative advantages and its structure as a membership-based network.
3. ILC's plan of action<sup>1</sup> – its response to the evaluation findings – sets out the targets and milestones for institutional reform that the Coalition is committed to completing by December 2008.
4. Simultaneously, ILC's programme of work is focused on implementing the *Strategic Framework 2007-2011: Putting a Pro-Poor Land Agenda into Practice*, approved at the biennial Global Assembly of Members in Uganda in April 2007. The framework has the following objectives:
  - ILC members provide coherent and coordinated support to global, regional and national commitments and actions to improve the access of poor men and women to natural resources, especially land.
  - Civil society participates more actively in, and exercises greater influence over, the policy- and decision-making processes that affect the access of poor men and women to natural resources, especially land.
  - Civil society, intergovernmental organizations and governments identify, share and adopt lessons and good practices that improve the access of poor men and women to natural resources, especially land.
  - ILC members have increased their capacity for networking, knowledge sharing, dialogue and joint action.
  - ILC becomes a member-led and financially sustainable coalition.
5. This report encompasses both progress made towards ILC's agenda for institutional change and an overview of operational activities towards implementation of the strategic framework, highlighting activities that are supported through IFAD's contributions to ILC.

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<sup>1</sup> ILC, "Advancing Together: the International Land Coalition's Plan of Action in Response to the External Evaluation" (Rome, 2006).

## II. Institutional change: implementing the ILC plan of action

6. In 2006, the ILC Council<sup>2</sup> approved the plan of action, subsequently ratified by the Assembly of Members in 2007. The plan has two main thrusts: (a) a set of commitments to structural changes in the institution, including clarification of its legal identity, strengthening the role of members and expanding the membership base; and (b) developing its operational activities into more strategically focused, integrated programmes at country, regional and global levels.
7. Regarding the legal status of ILC, the Assembly concluded that: (a) the value added of ILC is its relationship with the United Nations system, which contributes to its strength, leverage and credibility; (b) the need for a clear legal status applies principally to the ILC secretariat, rather than to ILC as an alliance of organizations, as the latter derives its legitimacy and basis for decision-making from its membership; (c) an independent legal expert will be commissioned to prepare a report and recommendations to the Council on establishing a clear legal status for ILC; and (d) the Council will decide on this matter at its November 2007 session and will authorize the appropriate actions to be taken.
8. The Assembly agreed upon the need to expand ILC's membership and strengthen the role of members in governance and operations. The Council was mandated to develop a membership strategy and to recommend the appointment of new members during 2007. This work is being led by a membership committee comprised of three civil society and two intergovernmental members.
9. The Assembly acknowledged that the Constitution would need to be amended following the decisions being taken on the legal status of ILC and other changes resulting from implementation of the plan of action.
10. Following Assembly approval of the strategic framework, the Coalition drafted a new business and operating model, as well as monitoring and evaluation guidelines for finalization, based on directives from and decisions of the Council.
11. ILC has begun to implement its resource mobilization strategy, approved at the April 2007 Assembly. In December 2006, following the approval of a grant by IFAD of US\$1.7 million for a two-year period, ILC received a grant from the European Commission, for an equivalent duration, in the amount of EUR 1.48 million (equivalent at the time of approval to US\$1.9 million). In 2007, a grant was negotiated with the International Development Research Centre for CAD 1.1 million (Canadian and United States dollars relatively on par) over the period ending in March 2009. These grants add to existing revenues in 2007 from the Canadian International Development Agency, the Netherlands, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the World Bank. Discussions are under way with other potential donors.
12. The strategic framework seeks to transform ILC into a member-led coalition, operating through a regionalized and decentralized structure, with the aim of improving ILC's relevance and effectiveness at the country level. Regional planning meetings took place in Africa and Latin America in October 2007, as did initial steps

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<sup>2</sup> The ILC Council meets every six months and is responsible for governance and oversight of the ILC between the biennial meetings of the Global Assembly of Members. It comprises six intergovernmental organizations (European Commission, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), IFAD, International Food Policy Research Institute, the World Bank and one vacancy) and eight civil society organizations (Association for Land Reform and Development – Bangladesh; Coordinación de Organizaciones No Gubernamentales y Cooperativas – Guatemala; Grupo Allpa – Peru; International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations – global; Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria – Indonesia; LandNet West Africa – Burkina Faso; Secours Populaire Français – France; and Zimbabwe Environment Research Organization – Zimbabwe).

toward decentralization in Asia, following the 2006 planning meeting with members in that region.

13. Drawing on input from members and partner organizations, ILC is revising its approach to communications to support its business and operations more effectively. This work includes redesigning the website to promote greater interactivity between members and partners, upgrading the ILC database, and preparing a strategy paper on communications, which will be discussed at the Council meeting in November 2007.

### **III. Operational activities**

14. ILC's programmes and activities are the ways and means by which the strategic framework is implemented. The 2007 programme has focused on:
  - (a) strengthening commitments to pro-poor land policies and practice through dialogue processes;
  - (b) supporting empowerment of communities and representative organizations through capacity-building, networking and knowledge exchange;
  - (c) advocating pro-poor land policies and laws and compliance with relevant international agreements. The actions are organized on regional and thematic bases and implemented through efforts by ILC members, partner organizations and the ILC secretariat.
15. In 2007, ILC had 19 active projects in Africa, 24 in Asia and the Pacific and 12 in Latin America and the Caribbean. Seventeen of these were supported with funds from the IFAD grant to ILC and included projects in Burkina Faso, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Nicaragua, Peru, the Philippines and South Africa.
16. Local tenure systems are a vital source of rights in much of Africa, but secure access to and control over land is at risk where state frameworks do not recognize local tenure systems. Programmes such as the Collaborative Action on Land Issues (CALI), a joint IFAD/Belgian Survival Fund/ILC initiative, undertook action research to provide evidence in support of the efforts by poor families to claim and protect their land access rights. In Uganda in 2005, with support through the Uganda Land Alliance and the Ministry of Lands, CALI began to encourage wide input into the formulation of a new land policy. In the Niger, CALI was launched in 2007 through the IFAD/Belgian Survival Fund project for the Promotion of Local Initiative for Development in Aguié. CALI is piloting methodologies at the village level to help small farmers and pastoralists obtain sustainable land-tenure security. This is an example of ILC supporting existing local community organizations by strengthening their capacity to use evidence-based research to promote their interests in policymaking.
17. There is increasing attention by African institutions to the importance of land tenure – such as the land policy framework process being developed by the African Development Bank, the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. ILC is a partner with these institutions in helping bring popular concerns into the framework process through regional and global forums, including participation at the ILC Global Assembly of Members and the regional meeting of ILC members in Africa. ILC also involved FAO, IFAD and LandNet West Africa as co-sponsors of ILC's Fifth Annual Roundtable with member states at the 2007 High-Level Segment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
18. Land policy reforms have been initiated in a number of Asian countries, but laws that provide for increased land access often go unimplemented or their targets underachieved. ILC is working with Asian organizations in six countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Nepal and the Philippines) to strengthen local organizations in the area of land rights. It seeks to link these efforts to national networks – which are working to increase tenure security through policy

reforms – and to regional efforts to monitor the implementation of related national laws and international agreements.

19. IFAD's contribution to ILC is supporting work in the Philippines by civil society networks to identify lessons from the national agrarian reform programme and to bring these into the policy debate on extension and revision of the legislative framework. These networks are also addressing cases in which locally powerful families are blocking the Government from implementing the reform's laws and regulations. This has led to some successes through which farmers have gained recognition of their land rights by combining legal advocacy and community organizing. In December 2007, ILC will use funds from the IFAD grant to support farmers' associations in Indonesia in evaluating a recently proposed policy to improve the land access of poor households and in engaging the Government in its implementation.
20. While land and agrarian reforms have taken place in Latin America throughout the last century, agrarian systems remain relatively uncompetitive and marked by a difficult coexistence between *minifundios* (smallholders) and *latifundios* (large-scale farmers). ILC's work in Latin America encourages analysis of the evolution of agrarian structures and policy dialogue on ways to support rural institutions, including land tenure institutions, so that they contribute to poverty reduction, improved food security and environmental sustainability.
21. ILC members in Latin America are monitoring land tenure security and the implementation of related national laws and international agreements. ILC, together with IFAD, has been engaged in the development of a framework for land tenure indicators through the Peruvian Center for Social Studies (CEPES), an ILC member.
22. In August 2007, CEPES hosted a regional seminar on tenure security in rural communities that brought together civil society organizations and governmental and intergovernmental bodies and included a workshop on the development of land tenure indicators. This activity was partially supported through IFAD's contribution to ILC, and was built on the regional platform on land access convened by CEPES in 2006 around the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, which also drew on ILC/IFAD support. These and other activities have yielded important input to the CEPES-led initiative on tenure indicators.
23. The IFAD contribution also supports the work of ILC programme staff – including three regional focal points – towards achieving ILC's strategic objectives:
  - facilitating contact and discussion among ILC members on land policies and methodologies (such as participatory mapping) or thematic issues (such as legal empowerment);
  - sharing information and lessons learned from operational activities such as the work on monitoring tenure security with members in other countries and regions;
  - analysing the organizational approaches of ILC members and partners to convening policy dialogues and reporting on these for wider dissemination;
  - supporting members and partners in opening or strengthening contacts with key institutions that work on land tenure, such as intergovernmental agencies or government ministries. ILC's hybrid nature, as a civil society and intergovernmental alliance, is a comparative advantage in fostering the participation of its members in policy debates with decision makers;
  - expressing concern to appropriate national authorities about threats or intimidation that partner organizations face because of their work in land access;

- identifying and preparing policy reports. In 2007, ILC launched its Knowledge for Change series to provide relevant and high-quality analysis on land access themes, for use by both its members and partners and the broader development community. Four resource publications were developed that drew upon practical, community-based knowledge and expertise from across the ILC network on the issues of accessing common property, pastoralist tenure and livelihoods, participatory mapping and the land rights of indigenous peoples and their neighbours;
- advising and soliciting input on the organizational policies of donor members on land issues. Regarding IFAD, this has included representation on the policy reference groups for land policy, climate change and the planned 2009 rural development report.

#### **IV. Conclusions**

24. Under the direction of the Assembly, ILC made progress in 2007 towards fulfilling its plan of action for institutional change. The three main benchmarks set for December 2007 in the ILC plan of action and in the grant agreement between ILC and IFAD were: (a) decision, through the Council, on the legal status of the secretariat; (b) establishment of a process for implementing that legal status; and (c) adoption of a strategy and steps taken towards expanding the membership.
25. The Coalition Council held its tenth session on 14-16 November 2007. Based on independent legal advice, the Council approved a resolution that clarifies its view of the identity of ILC and the legal status of its secretariat, including that: (i) ILC is an alliance of intergovernmental and civil society organizations that derives its identity from its members; (ii) the relationship of the ILC secretariat to the United Nations is necessary, and thus the ILC secretariat should continue to be hosted by a United Nations organization that is a member of the coalition; (iii) the secretariat should operate administratively as an integral part of the host organization, under a time-bound agreement, after which the hosting of the secretariat may rotate; and (iv) a memorandum of understanding with the Coalition Council will protect the host organization from accruing liabilities pursuant to its hosting of the secretariat. The Council also decided on the process that will be followed to implement the resolution.
26. The Council approved a membership strategy that sets forth clear roles, responsibilities and obligations for ILC members. The Council approved 25 new organizations as members, bringing total membership to 57 organizations, with decisions pending on 12 other applicant organizations. Furthermore, the Council endorsed the progress being made to regionalize ILC operations in Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean.
27. ILC also made progress in 2007 towards diversifying its funding base, in accordance with its resource mobilization strategy, through the new grant partnerships with the European Commission and the International Development Research Centre. The Council reviewed progress toward diversifying the funding base of ILC, with particular attention to the financial targets established by the plan of action. Based on currently signed funding agreements, IFAD's share in total ILC revenue will amount to 20 per cent, a much lower level than the 35 per cent target set for December 2008. Similarly, only 35 per cent of total administrative costs will be covered by IFAD, as against the expected target of 50 per cent for the year. Apart from funding from the European Commission and IFAD (both until 2008), funding sources include forward contributions from the International Development Research Centre (until 2009) and the Netherlands (until 2010). If successful, ongoing fund-raising efforts will further improve these projections.

28. Initial steps towards the regionalization and decentralization of ILC operations are being taken. These will be harmonized with the final business and operating model and the monitoring and evaluation framework.
29. Results and operational lessons from 2007 include:
  - ILC activities have increased the awareness and visibility of how local tenure systems are used to manage land and resource rights; how they provide access to poor households and communities; and how these may be strengthened. This element should continue to be integrated into policy dialogue, both at national and regional levels, and supported by ILC's global synthesis of lessons from its membership's work.
  - Capacity-building of civil society organizations has provided opportunities for rural people's organizations to participate in decision-making processes. These should be enhanced by linking capacity-building and policy dialogue activities strategically and operationally, so that people's organizations not only participate but may increase their leverage within such processes.
  - While community empowerment and capacity-building of civil society networks should remain a priority, particularly in order to achieve the results described above, there is also value in linking government agencies to this work, e.g. through government/civil society organization working groups or other cross-sector networks.
  - Efforts should be increased to monitor the implementation of national laws and policies, as well as international agreements related to land rights. Initial efforts by ILC members have established frameworks for this monitoring work, including indicators that could be applied to various tenure security contexts, and have generated commitments by other organizations to work collectively on monitoring.



