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Enabling poor rural people  
to overcome poverty

## **IFAD's 2009 publication on rural poverty**

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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:

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## **IFAD's 2009 publication on rural poverty**

### **I. Background and objective**

1. IFAD released its last rural poverty report in 2001,<sup>1</sup> 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, derived from successful experience on the ground, as a basis for dialogue at all levels, with the objective of putting rural poor people at centre stage in development efforts.
4. The publication will have a broad audience of development policymakers, practitioners and opinion leaders, both in developing and in developed countries.
5. 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. 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.

### **II. Main features and outline of the publication**

6. 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 as part of the implementation of the IFAD Strategy for Knowledge Management. It is in its aspect of improving learning from development practice that the publication is timely and needed. The publication will also build on and complement recent major endeavours to address rural and agricultural development, most importantly the *World Development Report 2008*.

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<sup>1</sup> *Rural Poverty Report 2001 – The Challenge of Ending Rural Poverty*.

7. The publication will be guided by the IFAD Strategic Framework 2007-2010<sup>2</sup> and its principles of engagement<sup>3</sup> in two ways: (i) focusing on enhanced access of rural 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.
8. 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, food security and poverty reduction. These are the cornerstones of IFAD's approach to rural poverty reduction. However, the publication will not be about IFAD, but about the people IFAD works with and their experiences. It will provide insights into how smallholders are responding to social and economic change. It will be based on an identification and understanding of what is actually happening in rural communities of developing countries, through a broad stocktaking exercise involving IFAD partners.
9. 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 of the United Nations (FAO), 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.
10. The publication will be composed of seven chapters. An introductory chapter will present a strong updated diagnostic of the state and trends of rural poverty in a rapidly changing context (climate change; demographic transition; rapid growth in emerging countries; and evolving agriculture, food and energy markets). It will include the most highly reliable estimates for scenarios of climate change impact and demand for agriculture products over the coming decades.
11. The core of the report will consist of five chapters addressing evolving challenges facing poor rural women and men, as articulated by IFAD's Strategic Framework: (i) access to and sustainable management of natural resources; (ii) access to agricultural services, rural finance and technology; (iii) access to transparent and remunerative markets; (iv) access to opportunities for rural non-farm employment and multiple livelihoods; and (v) access to policy and programming processes.
12. A concluding chapter will highlight lessons learned from successful or promising responses to rural poverty challenges, in particular, the key success factors in terms of institutions, policies and approaches to rural development. It will investigate what is needed to bridge the gap between current practices and the scale of the task at hand when future scenarios of climate change, demographic transition, and natural resource and energy scarcity are fully taken into account. The chapter will put forth recommendations: what to do more of; what to do differently in rural development programmes and policy; and what are the new frontiers of innovation to achieve rural poverty reduction and hunger eradication.

### **III. The process**

13. The publication will be shaped and managed by IFAD. However, in line with IFAD's principles of engagement, partnership will be a key feature of the process of developing the publication. To fully explore multistakeholder approaches and the diversity of the rural development spectrum, the 2009 publication on rural poverty

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> The framework's principles of engagement are: (i) selectivity and focus; (ii) targeting; (iii) empowering rural poor people; (iv) innovation, learning and scaling up; (v) effective partnerships; and (vi) sustainability.

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. A part of the report will be set apart for direct contributions by rural people's organizations.

14. 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.
15. The process has already started with the commissioning of background papers on: (i) the evolving context in which rural poor people make their living (climate change and environmental trends, demographic trends including urbanization and migration, market changes and economic growth in emerging countries) and (ii) the diagnostic of the five selected challenges as they materialize in different and evolving rural contexts. These background papers will build upon all recent literature on rural poverty, impact of climate change and agricultural development.
16. Simultaneously, IFAD staff and partners in the various regions are engaging in a major scouting exercise focused on successful or promising responses to the five selected challenges to take stock of what is working on the ground and why. This investigation will include, but will not be restricted to, IFAD-funded projects. Special attention will be given to innovation in agricultural technology, rural organizations and services, value chains and market access, enabling policies and institutions, and inclusive policy and programming processes. Each case study will present an analysis of the key success factors (in terms of poverty reduction and sustainable rural development).
17. A second step will consist of five regional multistakeholder consultations that will bring together the actors involved in the most successful experiences identified through the scouting exercise and key partners in government, civil society and academia. These consultations will discuss the background papers from a regional perspective, assess the value of the responses documented through the scouting and stocktaking exercise in the region and validate the lessons learned in terms of good practices and key success factors in responding to poverty challenges in a rapidly changing context.
18. The first "zero draft" of the publication will be developed by a drafting team (lead writer and IFAD core team) after the regional consultations. After in-house and expert review of the zero draft, a first version of the report will be circulated to selected partners for comments. A second version of the draft report will then be posted on the web after clearance from Senior Management.

#### **IV. Outcomes**

19. The 2009 rural poverty publication 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.
20. 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 multistakeholder 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.

## **V. Timing, coordination and resources**

21. The process of developing the publication started in September 2007 and will continue over 2008. A start-up workshop was held with partners selected for the background papers (FAO, the Overseas Development Institute, the Institute of Development Studies and the Royal Tropical Institute) on 5 and 6 December 2007. Regional consultations will be organized between May and July 2008. The first web version of the draft report will be available in February 2009. The launch of the publication is foreseen in September 2009.
22. Oversight of production is the responsibility of the IFAD Vice-President. The Policy Division (EO) provides technical and logistical coordination under the management of the Director, EO. A coordinator at the senior professional level is assigned to this project, together with an assistant coordinator. An interdepartmental reference group has been set up with focal points from all divisions under the Programme Management Department and the External Affairs Department. Responsibility for leading on each "challenge chapter" has been assigned to two regional economists and three policy coordinators.
23. The overall cost of the publication is estimated at US\$2.2 million over 2007, 2008 and 2009. Sixty per cent of the cost will be covered by already available supplementary funds and the EO administrative budget, which will invest a large part of its human and financial resources in this project between 2007 and 2009, as part of its regular knowledge management function. The remaining 40 per cent (US\$880,000) will be covered through the mobilization of additional supplementary funds.