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Enabling poor rural people  
to overcome poverty

## **Minutes of the ninety-second session of the Executive Board**

Executive Board — Ninety-third Session  
Rome, 24-25 April 2008

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For: **Approval**

## **Note to Executive Board Directors**

This document is submitted for approval by 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 technical questions about this document before the session:

**Paolo Ciocca**

Secretary of IFAD

telephone: +39 06 5459 2254

e-mail: [p.ciocca@ifad.org](mailto:p.ciocca@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)

## **Recommendation for approval**

The Executive Board is invited to approve amendments to the minutes of its ninety-second session, as shown in the present document, and to adopt the revised minutes.



## Minutes of the ninety-second session of the Executive Board

The representative of the United States of America has requested that the minutes of the ninety-second session of the Executive Board (document EB/92) be amended as shown below. For ease of reference, all insertions have been underlined.

### **B. Programme of work, Programme Development Financing Facility and administrative and capital budgets of IFAD and of its Office of Evaluation for 2008 (agenda item 3)**

8. Some Directors expressed concern about the increase in the PDFF of 13.9 per cent in nominal terms over the approved 2007 PDFF budget. In this regard, it was noted that this increase was in response to the drive to strengthen the impact of the programme of work. As such, it covered the costs relative to the mainstreaming of country presence and implementation of the changes introduced under the Action Plan, including strengthening IFAD's country programming capacity and the preparation of country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs). It was expected that cost savings would be identified in the proposal for 2009. In this context, the Board approved a total PDFF in the amount of US\$38.8 million.

### **I. Country strategic opportunities programmes (agenda item 10)**

#### **(a) Western and Central Africa**

##### *Mali*

22. The Executive Board reviewed the country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) for Mali and expressed appreciation for the participatory approach adopted in the design of the COSOP and the integration of comments arising from the country portfolio evaluation. It found the strategic objectives to be clear, relevant and in line with the country's poverty reduction strategies. The representative for the United States questioned the appropriateness of the second strategic objective relating to basic social services because this was outside of IFAD's role of reducing poverty through increased agricultural activity. The Director of the Division of Western and Central Africa advised that such components were critical for capacity-building and that, given their nature, they would be largely funded by the Belgian Survival Fund and complementary to IFAD interventions. The Board emphasized that it was crucial to ensure that the private sector actively participated in the implementation of the projects to be designed under this COSOP. It also recommended that the Malian Government take the necessary steps to improve the living and working conditions of deconcentrated technical service agents so that they could fully play their role in programme implementation. Finally, the Board recommended that close attention be given to improving the quality of statistical information on agriculture and overall rural development.

#### **(c) Latin America and the Caribbean**

##### *(i) Bolivia*

24. The Executive Board reviewed the COSOP for Bolivia and made several comments. The Director for Spain requested a greater involvement of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation in IFAD's future activities in Bolivia, advising that the Agency would be willing to cofinance new operations and to participate in projects from the design stage up to implementation. The Director for France pointed out that the country's indebtedness, while still a matter of concern, had been substantially improved thanks to public resources received from gas exploitation and the efforts of the international community to reduce external debt. Debt had represented 71 per cent of GNP in 2005 but was now below 50 per cent. The

representative for the United States expressed concern about the possible partnership with the Bank for Productive Development, the national development bank, and pointed out the institution's weak performance and its provision of subsidized loans. Management gave assurances that IFAD will not provide funds for subsidized credits. The Directors for the Netherlands and the United Kingdom raised the issue of the institutional weakness of the agrarian public institutions and the low quality of the staff. In response, it was emphasized that IFAD's country strategy was to support the Ministry of Agriculture and other public institutions through staff training and advice on better selection processes for project staff.

## **U. Other business (agenda item 22)**

### **(a) Collaboration among the three Rome-based United Nations agencies**

65. The Board considered IFAD's collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme as set out in document EB 2007/92/R.52 (to be revised as EB 2007/92/R.52/Rev.1). Having reviewed conference room paper 1, tabled during the session, the Board approved the proposed text for a decision contained therein and called on Management to consult with the Rome-based agencies with a view to preparing a document on the direction that future purpose-driven partnerships could take at the global, regional and country levels. The representative for the United States emphasized that IFAD should follow its strategic framework in deciding when and how to cooperate with other agencies and that the priority should be on directing and mobilizing resources to maximize IFAD's impact at the country and field levels. Management stressed that strong collaboration already existed among the Rome-based agencies. Consultations were ongoing to explore the opportunities for further collaboration in joint advocacy, analytical work and policy development, bearing in mind the mandates, strategies and policies of each agency and focusing on results which would add value and strengthen impact on the ground.

