



Governing Council

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Agenda Item 17

IFAD'S FOLLOW-UP TO THE WORLD FOOD SUMMIT

I. Introduction

1. IFAD's first Follow-up to the World Food Summit (WFS) was presented to the Twentieth Session of the Governing Council in February 1997. The document provided details of the Fund's involvement in the preparations leading up to the WFS, the overall institutional thrust to the WFS Follow-up, and a list of indicative examples of activities which support specific commitments pertinent to IFAD's mandate and the Summit's ultimate goal.

2. The document was accepted by the Governing Council which also emphasised the importance of viewing the Summit's seven commitments in its Plan of Action as an "integral and complementary whole".

3. At the Sixty-First Session of IFAD's Executive Board in September 1997, the Fund was requested to provide the forthcoming Twenty-First Session of the Governing Council with an update on WFS follow-up.

4. IFAD wishes to highlight, as was already noted during the last Governing Council and reiterated by the President during the Sixty-First Session of the Executive Board, that its mandate is such that "most of the Fund's activities fell into the context of the Plan of Action". IFAD's Annual Report for 1997 reinforces the importance of the Fund's efforts to improve food security and nutrition throughout its twenty years of operations. Indeed, it recognizes that "ultimately, the only significant criterion by which the worth of the Fund can be properly judged is its increasing impact, particularly with regard to food security and nutrition, upon the socio-economic circumstances of the rural poor of its Member States" (IFAD, Annual Report 1997, p. 20).

5. As a means of further reinforcing its focus on food security - one of the essential means for poverty alleviation - IFAD wishes to propose to the Governing Council that its annual reports be considered as the basic information document on the Follow-up to the WFS. IFAD further proposes to include a summary section within these reports, highlighting the activities it has undertaken - in cooperation with its various international, national and civil society partners - which are specific to the WFS recommendations. Details would also be provided of IFAD-specific institutional activities undertaken, such as studies and workshops, which were directly related to food security issues.

6. The Fund's update on the Follow-Up to the WFS will concentrate on specific actions of a cross-cutting nature which are of particular interest to the overall thrust of the WFS Plan of Action. This second document will also provide highlights of pertinent interventions undertaken by IFAD's different regional operational divisions.

II. Cross-Cutting Activities of Relevance to the Follow-Up to the WFS

7. This section highlights some examples of IFAD's efforts in four types of food-security interventions of specific relevance to the WFS Plan of Action: (a) interagency cooperation; (b) in-house debates to raise awareness and focus on food-security issues; (c) definition of tools for the analysis and operationalization of household-food-security (HFS) approaches to ensure greater impact on rural poverty alleviation; and (d) public dissemination of experiences acquired through IFAD interventions.

8. The food insecurity and vulnerability information and mapping system (FIVIMS) is the direct recommendation of WFS Objective 7.2.b, in which FAO was to play a catalytic role in this effort. IFAD's Technical Advisory Division has actively participated in the three meetings held so far. At the most recent meeting, 8-10 December 1997, participants formally nominated FAO as the Secretariat of the Inter-Agency FIVIMS Working Group. In addition, the participants requested IFAD to host the next FIVIMS inter-agency meeting, scheduled for 16-18 March 1998. They felt it would be useful to link that FIVIMS meeting with IFAD's already-programmed one-day Workshop on the Operationalization of Household Food Security, which will be held for IFAD staff on 19 March 1998 (see paragraph 11 below).

9. As a data user, IFAD is particularly interested in this initiative, which aims at bringing together data from various sources into one information system, reflecting key food-security indicators (productive, socio-economic, institutional, etc.) at the national, regional and local levels. IFAD's major concern is to ensure that the identified number of indicators will lead to country-level capacity to sustain the system while ensuring the verifiable quality of the data.

10. Workshop on Household Food Security and Gender: IFAD's Comparative Advantage, 15-16 May 1997. The major goal of this workshop was to create open discussion within the Fund on issues of major relevance to our daily operational activities. Attended by 87 participants (9 members of IFAD's Executive Board, 13 staff members of UN and international financial institutions (IFIs), 7 researchers/NGOs, and 58 IFAD staff members, the workshop provoked intense debate and was considered a great success. In fact, the major outcome was that it led each of IFAD's regional divisions to define its own priorities within an HFS and gender perspective. During the workshop, each regional division drew up its own strategy on HFS and these are currently being used collectively as an umbrella strategy for the Fund's overall regional programmes and projects. It was decided to organize such workshops for IFAD staff each year in order to sustain the Fund's level of debate, analysis and focus on food-security issues.

11. Workshop on the Operationalization of Household Food Security. This second workshop on HFS will be held on 19 March 1998, and will be a mid-term presentation of research under an IFAD technical assistance grant (TAG) to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) that began in 1996 and is expected to be completed by the end of 1998. Given the complexity of HFS issues and the multiplicity of dispersed design data, from household surveys to vulnerability mapping, this research should provide project design missions - which have both time and budget constraints - with the means to identify the most appropriate approach to data use, collection and analysis according to

specific agro-ecological regions and socio-economic profiles. Research is currently being undertaken in Honduras, Malawi and Mali, while the testing of the identified tools is foreseen in the context of new project formulations in Asia and possibly the Near East.

12. "Memory Checklists" of Issues on HFS and Gender. These are currently being field-tested before finalization (first quarter of 1998) and will provide project designers and implementors with key overall and sectoral analytic reference points on HFS and gender for inclusion in formulation and appraisal documents and for monitoring during implementation. The adoption of these memory checklists, which are expected to be used for all IFAD projects, will guarantee greater focus on and capacity for qualitative and quantitative measurements in IFAD's forthcoming interventions.

13. Study on Farm Production Technology for Women Farmers in Africa. The fieldwork for this study has been completed and the report is expected in February 1998. Financed under the Supplementary Funds of Japan with cofinancing from FAO through substantial technical support, the purpose of the study was to determine the human, socio-economic, cultural and technical context for the possible improvement of women's farm production technology, a topic that is insufficiently addressed in the relevant literature. The premise of the study was that since rural women are the major producers of food crops, and also the guarantors and managers of food security at the household level, it is crucial to understand their technological needs and tap their potential to improve their farming practices and productivity levels.

14. IFAD's Experience in Targeting the Rural Poor. A three-month preliminary, very important desk study on IFAD's experience in targeting over its twenty years will begin in mid-February 1998. The objective of the study is of direct relevance to the overall objective of the WFS Plan of Action, which requires all of its implementors to address and target issues efficiently in order to meet the ultimate goal of food security and the elimination of hunger. This study (under the supervision of the Technical Advisory Division and in close cooperation with the Office of Evaluation and Studies) will provide IFAD with a clearer understanding of successful and less successful approaches and instrumentalities in targeting within its interventions. As IFAD's project objectives reflect its mandate to alleviate poverty through agricultural production and improve the nutrition of the rural poor, an important outcome of the study will be that of ascertaining the relationship between the objectives set and the impact that targeting has had on meeting these objectives. This study should assist IFAD and its partners in better targeting their interventions to the food insecure.

15. Staff Working Papers - New Series on Household Food Security and Gender. The Technical Advisory Division of IFAD began producing a series of staff working papers in 1992 on Technical Issues in Rural Poverty Alleviation. The division initiated a new series on HFS and Gender in December 1997 and the first four papers were distributed in January 1998.

16. Agricultural Research and Training. In 1997, IFAD had 41 ongoing TAGs (for an estimated total of USD 55 million) in support of the agricultural research and training programmes of national research institutions within the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) network in the five regions of the Fund's operations. These programmes, detailed in the 1997 Annual Report, emphasize the expansion of feasible technology alternatives for smallholders and are designed not only to enhance their agricultural output and productivity but also to improve their income-generation potential. The TAGs have focused particular attention on smallholder crops and commodities that constitute the mainstay for rural food security and improved household income and nutrition.

III. IFAD's Regional Thrusts - Highlights

Africa I (Western and Central Africa)

17. Targeting. The overall thrust of the Africa I Regional Division's portfolio investment is geared towards the alleviation of food insecurity. The target group in the region's 24 countries consists mainly of poor crop-producing households that operate holdings smaller than the average farm and face natural resource degradation and continuing food insecurity. Food-security considerations are crucial determinants of IFAD targeting in the region.

18. Strategy. The Country Strategy Opportunities Paper (COSOP) for Côte d'Ivoire, approved in December 1997, is a good example of how food security is being increasingly integrated into the division's country strategies. An HFS approach was proposed for future IFAD interventions in that country. This implies an explicit recognition of sources and uses of income within the household, separated by gender. In addition, the full array of labour-involving activities engaged in by rural households needs to be considered in designing activities to alleviate food insecurity. Given that rural men and women engage in different activities and have differential access to public and project goods and services, it was thought critical to be aware of these differences and tailor project design accordingly. Careful diagnostic surveys are important to gaining this understanding.

19. Cassava Initiative. Since last year, IFAD has led a global cassava initiative in recognition of the crucial role this crop plays in coping strategies for the rural poor in many developing countries and its role (actual and potential) in enhancing rural incomes through processing and marketing, especially for women. With a view towards increasing the effectiveness of future investments in cassava development, this initiative includes carrying out case studies in eight countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, the purpose of which is to gain a greater appreciation of the role of cassava in household and national-level food security and to assess the experience in technology development and transfer.

20. Belgian Survival Fund Joint Programme (BSF.JP). Four newly-designed BSF.JP projects will soon be operating in the region (Burkina Faso, Chad, D.R. Congo and Mali). These grants are targeted at very destitute rural populations and have food-security enhancement as a primary objective. For example, the BSF.JP grant in Chad for the IFAD Ouadis of Kanem Agricultural Development Project covers the areas of nutrition, health, water and sanitation, and their effective integration into the project's overall rural development thrust.

Africa II (Eastern and Southern Africa)

21. Strategy. The Africa II Regional Division's aim is to foster approaches to rural poverty reduction through addressing the constraints faced by smallholders in enhancing their HFS. The strategy involves a combination of efforts to increase the resilience and level of food production in low resource environments, and to give rise to more cash income from sustainable on and off-farm activities in higher potential areas. Within the framework of the strategy, reflected by both the recently-approved interventions and the activities currently being developed in the pipeline, the regional focus is placed on key areas that (a) allow smallholder access to agricultural intensification and diversification; (b) allow smallholders access to productive capital; and (c) promote sustainable community resource management, particularly in ecologically marginal areas.

22. Activities. In the development of its approved projects in 1997, the division has focused on interventions that are targeted to supporting smallholders in exploiting opportunities for the production of cash crops and higher-value food crops. This applies particularly to Uganda's Vegetable Oil

Development Project, which seeks an innovative national entry point into palm-oil production through a smallholder-led development process; and Angola's Northern Fishing Communities Development Programme, which focuses on creating added value from small-scale fishing and fish processing at the village level. Neither of these projects' target groups are exposed to pronounced under- or malnutrition, and the projects consequently share a strong market-integration approach, which will enable the beneficiaries to grasp opportunities arising in the context of positive macro-economic development. Here, investments are long-term and the enhancement of household food security is pursued through higher and more stable income from the sustainable use of available and improved resources.

23. Another regional focus concerns responsiveness to the target groups' vulnerability to food shortages or imbalances. The Rwanda Returnees Rehabilitation Programme is geared to address the most pressing needs of returning refugees and displaced persons. It addresses urgent survival problems in a highly food-insecure environment by distributing production packages that would enable the target households to cover their family food needs and reconstitute their production capital. Furthermore, IFAD gave full recognition to the fragile political and financial environment of post-conflict reconstruction through the mobilization of grant financing for the programme.

24. Other activities in 1997 included the regional promotion of smallholder-market linkages through the extension of Zimbabwe's successful Agribusiness Entrepreneur Network and Training (AGENT) Programme, coordinated through CARE. This is a particularly cost-effective and innovative example of fostering input-supply and service-provision structures to increase smallholder agricultural production through the establishment of a network of small-scale traders. In addition, the division mobilized TAG support for the Secretariat of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) to facilitate the articulation of a regional consensus for the development of a shared regional strategy on the role of public policy in alleviating rural poverty. In Zambia, IFAD has continued to support the national Food Security, Health and Nutrition Information System (FHANIS), using its vulnerability mapping indicators to carry out a mid-term evaluation of another project there, the Northwestern Province Area Development Project - Phase II.

Asia and the Pacific

25. The lending strategy of IFAD's Asia and the Pacific Division and its general programme of work for 1997 and 1998 fully support the HFS objectives of the Fund's principal beneficiaries. As in the past, the key to poverty alleviation will be, on the one hand, the improvement of income-generating opportunities and, on the other, support for increases in agricultural production, which result in direct consumption or cash benefits that can be translated into increased purchasing power for nutritional gain.

Several IFAD interventions in Asia may be drawn upon to illustrate how this strategy is operationalized.

26. In India, IFAD is financing the Andhra Pradesh Participatory Tribal Development Project. This project is concerned with a food deficit area where most of the rural households are producing only 60% of their food requirements. The total annual incremental production of food grains at full development of the project is expected to be around 40 000 t, with paddy production predominant at 29 000 t and a substantial increase in oilseed production amounting to about 13 000 t. The primary emphasis of the project is on subsistence food production. Families will become self-sufficient in meeting their daily caloric requirement following the projected increase in food-crop production. In addition, the families' nutritional status will be raised through the increased availability of more nutritious food grains, fruits and vegetables, together with increased awareness of nutritional requirements. A total of 76 810 households will benefit from the project, which centres on a

participatory planning process for community development activities through which women are provided a greater voice in community affairs. Project interventions are expected to yield significant increases in household income, with returns to family labour well above the opportunity cost.

27. In Laos, IFAD supports the Xieng Khouang Agricultural Development Project. This project is aimed at households that are unable to produce enough foodstuffs for family consumption, those that have less than average assets in terms of productive resources and those currently producing opium. It includes support for livestock, agriculture and irrigation development, and it is expected that an increase of about 36% of total rice output will be achieved through this project, which will also distribute 3 000 cows and add 2 200 heifers and 2 100 bulls to the total herd. Incomes of project beneficiaries are expected to increase from LAK 7 000 to LAK 99 000, depending on the farm type. The project's impact on women is assured through the involvement of the Lao Women's Union, since women are expected to make up a large proportion of the beneficiaries of the credit component.

28. In Bangladesh, the Smallholder Livestock Development Project addresses the food security needs of women who are not only among the core poor but are also heads of households. The 260 000 families comprising the primary beneficiaries are those below the hard-core poverty line (USD 105) and the absolute poverty line (USD 133). The women benefiting from the poultry-development support programme are among the most destitute in the country: 66% report annual cash incomes of USD 29 or less, and 62% are heads of households. At full development, the project is expected to lead to an annual production of 6.4 million poultry and 157 million eggs.

29. In Indonesia, the Eastern Islands Smallholder Cashew Development Project is designed as a poverty alleviation programme that provides additional means for farmers to increase available income and stabilize their access to food supplies. Average nutrition levels in the Eastern Islands are lower than those of the country as a whole. Food security will be assured through continued cropping on existing holdings, intercropping with cashew, and eventually through the purchase of additional food with cashew revenues. The project will make a significant contribution to improving household food security among some 45 000 farm families. For the 25 000 farmers with hitherto unproductive land, family incomes will more than double. Families that earned a pre-project annual income below the poverty line of USD 352 will exceed that level as the result of the project. It is also expected that the remaining beneficiary families will realize increases in income ranging from 33 to 66%.

Latin America and the Caribbean

30. As women are major actors in decisions regarding food production, and provide the main entry point for addressing HFS and nutritional objectives, the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Division has developed a strong programme during 1997 to: (a) strengthen gender aspects conceptually and operationally in all ongoing projects, and (b) propose practical tools for project staff in applying a gender focus within the framework of their responsibilities.

31. At the beginning of 1997, the division initiated the implementation of a Programme for the Reinforcement of Gender Aspects (PROFAGEP) in IFAD projects in Central America, Panama and Mexico, in coordination with the Regional Unit for Technical Assistance (RUTA), through a TAG cofinanced by IFAD and implemented by the World Bank.

32. The programme was conceived as a support mechanism to IFAD's gender strategy, which seeks to incorporate women on an equal footing with men in development activities and facilitate their access to productive resources, services and know-how, in order to increase their income and improve their family living conditions. As a result, the programme has undertaken the following: (a) prepared a diagnosis of gender in all 14 ongoing projects in Central America, Panama and Mexico; (b) elaborated

four case studies on gender aspects, to serve as a basis for discussion and analysis; (c) implemented a gender workshop in Guatemala focusing on the four case studies, with an exhibition of the projects' produce and a display of gender training material; and (d) elaborated, together with the projects involved, a Plan of Action on Gender that includes a programme of monitoring and evaluation to strengthen gender aspects in the various projects. In addition, the programme has compiled a unique continent-wide collection of gender training material. A database representing over 400 sites related to publications on gender issues was made available to workshop participants.

Near East and North Africa

33. IFAD's assistance to the Near East and North Africa Region aims at enabling its target group to access adequate food (including safe drinking water) on a stable and sustainable basis through focusing implicitly on HFS. Favourable entry points for addressing nutrition-related issues are provided through: emphasis on increasing income and food production by smallholders; stress on conservation of the resource base, including soil, water and rangelands; and promotion of community participation at all stages of the project development cycle. Within this context and given the important role played by rural women in the translation of incremental production/income into household food security and improved health status, rural women are provided training, credit and access to time-and-labour-saving technologies.

34. The following country examples highlight the overall regional thrust.

35. In Lebanon, the Agriculture Infrastructure Development Project aims at developing and conserving land and water resources, particularly on small holdings of less than 0.5 ha. In addition to land terracing and the construction of walls and hill ponds, the project provides about one million fruit tree seedlings and the construction/rehabilitation of rural roads. The project's components are of direct relevance to HFS through increased agricultural production, improved marketing and higher income.

36. In Yemen, one of the poorest countries in the Near East and North Africa Region, the Southern Governorates Rural Development Project and the Raymah Area Development Project are in response to the increasing poverty among farm families dispossessed by the denationalization of the land. Both projects address HFS issues through improved agricultural practices; community sensitization, mobilization and organization; and rural family and women-in-development issues.

37. The overall objective of the Farm Privatization Project in Azerbaijan is to support the Government in its efforts to reform the agricultural sector through a pilot operation in farm privatization. The project will develop the institutional capacity needed to manage and support economy-wide privatization in agriculture; facilitate the establishment and development of village groups; setup social service systems to replace services previously provided by collective farms; and provide seed funds for investments by small farmers and for public infrastructure investments at the community and village level. Food security will be improved for some 6 600 households through farm privatization support, the rehabilitation of main irrigation and drainage systems, and community development and income-generating activities.

38. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Small Farm Reconstruction and Development Project, with its poverty-oriented recapitalization of war-affected, small-scale, private livestock farming, is believed to be an effective way for rapid and sustainable poverty alleviation, thus laying the basis for a market-oriented agriculture for small farmers. The project's main component is the procurement and distribution of about 7 200 dairy cattle and 4 300 small ruminants and pigs on a credit in-kind basis and improvement of associated animal health and husbandry. Beneficiaries will be hill farmers and their families - principal war victims - in former front-line areas in the Federation and the Republicka Srpska.