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Enabling poor rural people  
to overcome poverty

## **2007 Progress Report on the International Land Coalition**

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For: **Information**

## **Note to Governors**

This document is submitted for the information of the Governing Council.

To make the best use of time available at Governing Council sessions, Governors are invited to contact the following focal point with any technical questions about this document before the session:

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# 2007 Progress Report on 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. ILC is independently governed by a Coalition Council<sup>1</sup> comprised of fourteen of its members.
2. The 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.
3. This report provides an overview of operational activities towards implementation of the strategic framework, highlighting activities that are supported through IFAD's contributions to ILC.

## II. Operational activities

4. 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; and (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.
5. 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,

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<sup>1</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).

Honduras, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Nicaragua, Peru, the Philippines and South Africa.

6. 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.
7. 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).
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.

12. 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.
13. 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.
14. ILC made progress in 2007 towards diversifying its funding base, in accordance with its resource mobilization strategy. 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 approximately on par) over the period ending in March 2009. Also, in 2007 the Government of the Netherlands approved a grant of US\$2.0 million over the period ending in 2010. These grants add to existing revenues in 2007 from the Canadian International Development

Agency, the Belgian Survival Fund Joint Programme, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the World Bank. Discussions are under way with other potential donors.

15. The year 2007 also saw further progress towards ILC becoming 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 toward decentralization in Asia, following the 2006 planning meeting with members in that region.

### **III. Conclusions**

16. 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.

