



IFAD
INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
Consultation on the Sixth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources - Fourth Session

Rome, 9-10 October 2002

**ATTENDANCE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AT
EXECUTIVE BOARD SESSIONS OF IFAD AND OTHER
INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

1. At its Third Session the Consultation was presented with a proposal to have IFAD consider the attendance of a non-governmental organization (NGO) observer at Executive Board sessions. This proposal was made on the basis that IFAD should establish a formal relationship with the NGO community and invite one representative from the NGO community to attend all Executive Board sessions.
2. This information paper is intended to provide the Consultation with background information both on IFAD's current relationship with NGOs and their attendance at IFAD meetings and on the practice at other international financial institutions (IFIs).

IFAD Relationships with NGOs

3. Many NGOs have applied for and obtained observer status at the Governing Council of IFAD and have participated in that capacity at a number of these annual sessions. Over the past few years, five to ten NGO observers have attended each Governing Council. Each year, moreover, the NGO community designates a representative, who is then invited to address the Governing Council. Two NGO representatives participated in the interactive panel discussion on the main theme of the Governing Council at its last session, and a number were lead speakers in the roundtable discussions. Apart from the lead speakers, all other NGO representatives at the Governing Council were invited to participate in both the panel and roundtable discussions. IFAD intends to extend similar invitations for the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Session of the Governing Council in February 2003.
4. In addition, since 1990 IFAD has organized periodic global consultations with NGOs. These consultations – of which ten have been held to date – have provided a formal forum for close interaction between selected development NGOs and IFAD staff on a number of policy and operational issues of common concern. The meetings have contributed to forging stronger partnerships for common objectives. They have also given IFAD the opportunity to tap NGO knowledge and expertise, which can contribute both to increasing the responsiveness and sustainability of the Fund's operations and to strengthening its role as a knowledge institution on poverty and poverty reduction. To date, 240 NGOs



have participated in consultations. More than 50% of these have worked or are working with IFAD in the field. The number of participating NGOs at any given consultation has ranged from 23 to 40. Case studies of NGO and IFAD projects are the point of departure for discussions, and topics have included: IFAD/NGO/government partnerships for poverty reduction and food security; credit for rural poor producers; rural people's organizations; local area development programmes for sustainable resource management; land degradation and rural poverty; and capacity-building at the local level. Since 1998, consultations have been held outside IFAD headquarters. The locations vary, but they are usually near an IFAD-supported project so that participants can examine on-the-ground realities and exchange views. Preparation of the consultations is facilitated by an IFAD/NGO Consultations Steering Committee.

5. Since 2000, a number of regional consultations with NGOs have also been organized, focusing on IFAD's regional poverty assessments and strategies.

6. Collaboration between IFAD and NGOs in policy and strategy development has increased over the years and, today, the Fund draws on NGO knowledge and experience at the earliest stages of its own country strategy articulation. In addition, NGOs participate in 'reality check' workshops that are organized to validate such strategies.

7. Most collaboration between NGOs and IFAD has been at the project level. In this regard, collaboration covers the entire project cycle – formulation, design, implementation, evaluation and impact assessment. Field-level collaboration entails a tripartite partnership between IFAD and the NGO and government concerned.

8. NGO participation in IFAD projects has grown considerably. By end-2001, some 800 NGOs had been involved in IFAD-supported projects compared with 173 in 1993. More than 80% of these NGOs are from the South.

9. In 1987, IFAD established the IFAD/NGO Extended Cooperation Programme (ECP) with a view to enhancing its **direct** collaboration with NGOs in the promotion of participatory and community-based rural development and poverty reduction activities. The principal objectives of the ECP are to:

- (a) extend direct grant financing in support of innovative pilot activities carried forward by NGOs that may provide prototypes and instruments of intervention for ongoing or future IFAD loan operations;
- (b) offer IFAD opportunities to tap valuable NGO experience and know-how in order to improve its own approaches and increase the responsiveness and sustainability of its development operations;
- (c) contribute to the development of a repository of relevant experience and know-how in operational and strategic issues and thus enhance IFAD's role as a knowledge institution on rural poverty and its reduction; and
- (d) build partnerships and maintain regular consultations and dialogue with a family of development NGOs that can assist in IFAD's strategy articulation and choice of project interventions as well as in its engagement in policy dialogue and advocacy.

10. Another important feature of the ECP is the link it forms between IFAD and NGOs with the consent of the host government. In this way, it contributes both to harmonized action and to mutual recognition and appreciation among the partners involved, which, in turn, encourages governments to build upon the experience and know-how accumulated by NGO activities.



11. ECP support has been increasing, from an initial annual allocation of USD 350 000 in 1988 to USD 2.5 million in 2002. As of 31 December 2001, 196 grants had been made under the programme, representing a total commitment of approximately USD 14 million. Since 1997, IFAD has extended 20-30 grants per year. Any single ECP grant cannot exceed USD 100 000.

12. Furthermore, the creation and hosting of the Popular Coalition by IFAD has provided wider and ongoing relationships for civil society and NGOs not only with IFAD, but also with other intergovernmental organizations. At the recommendation of IFAD, the Popular Coalition Steering Committee was structured so as to provide a prominent role for NGOs, as reflected in its composition of seven NGOs and five intergovernmental organizations. IFAD, through the Popular Coalition, has been unique in creating a mechanism that provides NGOs with influence in policy making and governance at the international level and for country level programming and policy dialogue. At present this involves ongoing policy and programme activities with NGOs in thirty-eight countries. Among the results have been numerous regional consultations by the Popular Coalition and the recent inclusion of NGO representatives on the IFAD delegation to the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

NGO Participation in Meetings of Other IFIs

13. A survey of other IFIs (African Development Bank (AfDB), Asian Development Bank (AsDB), Inter-American Development Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank) revealed that none has an NGO representative attending its executive board meetings.

14. A number of IFIs involve NGOs in their annual meetings and related events. For example, at such times, AfDB, AsDB, IMF and World Bank hold a number of seminars/side events to which NGO representatives are invited. However, it is IFAD's understanding that such representatives do not normally address these annual meetings.

15. While NGOs do not attend meetings of the AfDB executive board or speak at its annual meetings, from ADF-IX on, civil-society representatives (two-to-three) have been invited to attend replenishment meetings and, from time-to-time, asked to give their views.

16. Governors of AsDB (from Member States) are allowed to make statements to the annual meetings, but this does not apply to Observers. Like IFAD, AsDB has a focal point that coordinates all NGO (70-100) representatives attending its annual meetings. As well as a series of informal meetings (including AsDB presentations), a 'formal' NGO Forum is held at which selected issues are discussed by a panel comprising representatives of NGOs and other organizations and/or AsDB staff. The NGO representatives also have an open meeting with the President of AsDB. Consideration is being given to the possibility of holding a joint NGO-private sector seminar in 2003.

Global Environmental Facility

17. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) permits five NGOs to be represented at its Council sessions. Representatives of these organizations attend all meetings of the Council and are allowed to speak once on each agenda item. The NGOs are selected by the NGO community accredited to the organization each year, and GEF covers all costs relating to their attendance.