

11-12 February 2008

The Farmers' Forum

in conjunction with the Thirty First Session of IFAD's Governing Council



PARTNERSHIPS IN PROGRESS

**Report to the global meeting of the Farmers' Forum
in conjunction with the Thirty-First Session of the Governing Council of IFAD
11-12 February 2008**

IFAD interdepartmental Policy Reference Group on the Farmers' Forum

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Report to the global meeting of the Farmers' Forum in conjunction with the Thirty-First Session of the Governing Council of IFAD 11-12 February 2008¹

INTRODUCTION

1. In October 2004 a meeting was held at IFAD Headquarters with leaders of eight farmers' organizations from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe and with staff members and Senior Managers of the Fund to exchange views on directions of future partnerships between IFAD and Farmers and Rural Producers Organisations (FOs). Following a proposal from ROPPA (Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et Producteurs Agricoles de l'Afrique de l'Ouest), this meeting launched the idea of establishing a Farmers' Forum as a permanent feature of IFAD's Governing Council.

2. In February 2005 IFAD, in partnership with the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), La Via Campesina (LVC) and ROPPA, organized a workshop in Rome before the Twenty-Eighth Session of IFAD's Governing Council. The workshop discussed the proposal for a Farmers' Forum at the Governing Council. A brief but far-reaching concluding statement was presented to the President of IFAD, and formed the basis of the Farmers' Forum initiative. A Steering Committee was constituted to review the operational proposal for the Farmers' Forum and organise the Forum itself. It was agreed that the a global meeting of the Forum would be held every two years in conjunction with IFAD's Governing Council, with national and regional consultations carried out between each global meeting.

3. The Farmers' Forum was therefore established as an on-going bottom-up process of consultation and dialogue between small farmers and rural producers' organizations, IFAD and governments, focused on rural development and poverty reduction. In this context, FOs are defined as membership-based organizations of smallholders, family farmers and rural producers, including pastoralists, artisanal fishers, landless people and indigenous people, that are structured beyond the grassroots or community level, at local, national, regional and global levels.

4. Following country and regional level consultations, the first global meeting of the Farmers' Forum was held in Rome in conjunction with the Governing Council of IFAD in February 2006². It gathered fifty FOs representatives from all regions of the world. In conclusion of the meeting, the Steering Committee agreed upon a list of requests and recommendations to IFAD that were presented to the Governing Council.

5. In May of that same year, the President of IFAD participated in the World Farmers Congress of IFAP, in Seoul. In his keynote address to the Congress, the President responded to

¹ This report has been prepared by Philippe Remy and Maria-Soledad Marcos (Policy Division, IFAD). It received inputs from and has been endorsed by the members of the Policy Reference Group on the Farmers Forum representing all divisions of the Programme Management Department and External Affairs Department of IFAD. It was reviewed and cleared by Jean-Philippe Audinet, Acting Director of the Policy Division.

² This meeting benefited from the financial support of the Italian Government

the recommendations of the Farmers' Forum and took a number of commitments on behalf of the Fund³.

6. Among those commitments was the one of monitoring progress in IFAD engagement with FOs and reporting back to the Farmers' Forum. This is the purpose of the present report – the first of its kind – that covers the period 2006-2007.

7. The main recommendations of the first meeting of the Farmers' Forum and IFAD commitments related to five areas:

- Involvement of FOs in IFAD Country Programmes;
- Direct financial support to FOs (grants);
- Support to policy dialogue at regional and sub-regional level;
- FOs in IFAD corporate policies and
- The Farmers' Forum process itself.

8. The report focuses on these five areas. It is based on a review of activities carried out by IFAD with FOs and a survey of IFAD Country Programme Managers (CPMs). The survey questionnaire was designed to provide information on: (i) the frequency of IFAD engagement with FOs in 2006/2007; (ii) the degree of engagement in different type of activities at country level, in particular in the development of IFAD country strategies (COSOP) and in the design and implementation of new projects⁴.

9. This report presents simple facts and figures on the evolving partnership between IFAD and FOs since the first meeting of the Farmers' Forum. It does not present a qualitative analysis of this partnership and even less an assessment of its impact on the ground. Indeed the period under review is too short and the activities reported are too recent to allow for an impact assessment. Finally it should be noted that this is a report by IFAD to be considered as an input into the Farmers' Forum. The comments and reactions of Farmers representatives will be reported in the proceedings of the meeting.

1. INVOLVEMENT OF FARMERS' ORGANISATIONS IN IFAD COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

10. IFAD supported operations take place at country level in the framework of its country programmes. Country programmes are defined by the Country Strategic Opportunities Programme document (COSOP). The COSOP process⁵ involves a cycle of formulation, review and evaluation. Once approved by the Executive Board of IFAD, COSOPs define all IFAD's activities in the country: loan funded investment projects⁶, country grants and policy dialogue initiatives, all of which are intended to reinforce each-other.

³ See annex 1, extract from the keynote address of President Lennart Bage to the World Farmers Congress, Seoul, May 2006.

⁴ Out of a total of 62 projects approved in 2006/2007, information was received for 56 of them.

⁵ IFAD Guidelines for preparation and implementation of a Results-Based Country Strategic Opportunities Programme, December 2006.

⁶ IFAD supports an array of projects and programmes in its member countries, ranging from small discrete projects, to projects co-financed with another institution, large grant-financed project, Flexible Lending Mechanism (FLM) programmes, national programmes and Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp) programmes. Henceforth the term 'project' is used generically to describe all of them, in order to distinguish the specific activity from the broader IFAD country programme within which they all fit. Loan funded projects constitute 90% of all IFAD programme of work.

11. The principal mechanism for implementing the country programme is the Country Programme Management Team (CPMT). The CPMT is primarily a *resource group* of stakeholders in IFAD's country programme who participate in the entire country programme design and implementation, from the COSOP and through the various stages of project and programme design, implementation and supervision⁷.

12. In addition to its main financial instrument – loans to Government – IFAD has a grant facility. The Grants Policy⁸ calls for IFAD to use grant resources in cases where they have comparative advantage over loan financed projects and in a way that complements the latter. One of the two objectives defined by the grant policy is to build capacities of partner institutions, including Community Based Organisations, Farmers' Organisations, and NGOs⁹.

I.1 FOs involvement in the development of IFAD Country Strategies (COSOP)

Farmers Forum Recommendation: *FOs to participate – and in all cases, be at least consulted - in the development of IFAD's strategies at both the national level (in country strategic opportunities programmes - COSOPs) and the regional level.*

IFAD Commitment: *IFAD agreed with the principle of systematic consultation with FOs in the preparation of COSOPs. We will do this in countries where appropriate national organisations exist. We will also go from consultation to active participation where capacity exists and in agreement with governments.*

13. IFAD approved 24 COSOPs in 2006/2007. Figure 1 below illustrates the frequency of FOs involvement in COSOP design processes over the biennium. It shows a significant evolution over the last two years. Cases of "consultation" comprise different kinds of engagement with FOs varying across countries. In some cases there was a simple meeting between FOs and the Country Programme Manager; in others FOs' provided comments on the draft COSOP documents or presented their views in the validation workshop. Out of these very frequent cases of consultation, the cases of "Active participation" are reported in the second set of columns in figure 1. These are cases where FOs representatives were formally included in

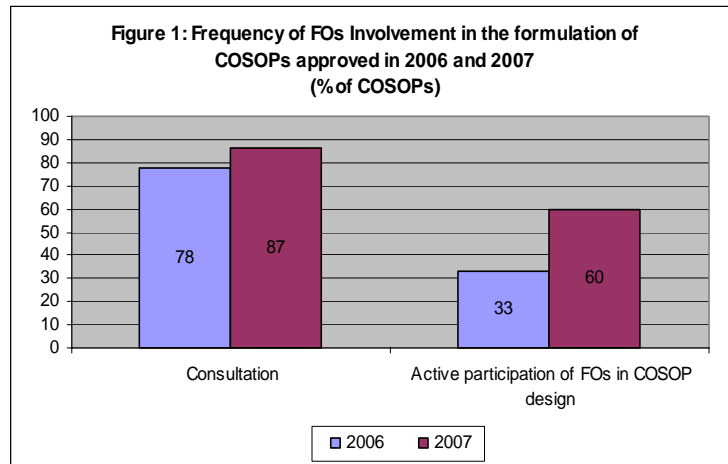
⁷ The CPMT has an in-country component and a headquarters component. The core of the headquarters component includes the Country Programme Manager and other IFAD staff from various Divisions. At country level, the CPMT may include a representative from the Government focal point ministry (e.g. Ministry of Finance); representatives from other key Government institutions involved in the IFAD country programme; the directors of ongoing IFAD-supported projects; a representative from each of the contracted Cooperating Institutions; in some cases a Field Presence Officer, representatives from donors based in the country; and representatives from civil society involved in the country programme: Farmers' Organisations, NGOs, community-based organisations and other non-state actors. The CPMT membership is variable and its composition varies according to the activity undertaken, under the management of the CPM.

⁸ Guidelines and procedures for the implementation of IFAD Grants Programme, 2004.

⁹ Grant financing can be provided to developing Member States, intergovernmental organisation in which such Member States participate and to Civil Society Organisations (including FOs) with whom a Grant Agreement needs to be stipulated in all cases. Recipient organisations need to meet IFAD's fiduciary requirements. This is assessed through the review of the organisation's financial documents and legal status, external audit reports, audited financial statements, annual report, constitution and by-laws. Grants can be "Global and Regional" or "Country Specific". Within both categories, the grants can be "large" (i.e. over USD 200 000 and requiring Executive Board approval) or "small" (below USD 200 000 and requiring President's approval). The implementation period of small grants can not exceed two years, while that of a large grant can not exceed five years. The total grants envelope is pegged to the volume of the lending programme and represents 10% of the total approved Programme of Work.

the Country Programme Management Team or where FOs provided substantial contributions throughout the COSOP design process.

14. During 2006/2007, FOs were consulted in most COSOP formulation, up to 87% in 2007. Overall, the objective of “systematic consultation” is basically achieved. The quality and intensity of the consultation also improved significantly, with “Active participation” being observed in 60% of the cases in 2007.



- In countries such as **Nepal, Cambodia, Honduras, Panama, Yemen and Jordan**, FOs were invited to formal local and national consultations where their representatives could put forth their ideas and expectations for the country strategy. In **Tanzania** a specific session for consultation with representatives of FOs was organized during the elaboration of the COSOP prior to the final validation workshop, in which FOs' representatives also participated.
- In **Burkina Faso, Mali, Madagascar, Rwanda and Moldova**, FOs representatives were formally members of the IFAD Country Programme Management Team (CPMT), together with other stakeholders such as Government, donors and NGOs which provided guidance and inputs throughout the whole preparation process. In **Kenya**, although FOs were not involved in the preparation of the COSOP approved in 2006, national FOs now belong to the CPMT.

15. Participation of FOs in COSOP formulation provided valuable inputs, in particular on aspects related to the definition of strategic objectives, the targeting criteria and the conditions for rural people participations in the Country Programme. One of the immediate effects of this increasing participation is that in almost 50% of the COSOPs approved in 2007, one of the strategic objectives is explicitly dedicated to Farmers Organisations (against 33% in 2006), in most cases for strengthening FOs capacities to engage in policy processes or in the implementation of development programmes. This is the case in **Egypt, Madagascar, Honduras, Cameroon, Tanzania, Mali, Cambodia, Yemen and Jordan**.

- In **Cambodia**, in order to reinforce existing partnerships with FOs, these have been involved at different stages during the design of the country's strategy. FOs have been invited to preparatory meetings and have provided written comments. They have also been included among the beneficiaries of the first Strategic Objective of the country strategy (SO1) which aims at contributing to economic growth in the targeted rural areas. In this framework, FOs will directly be targeted through *“formation and capacity-building of groups of poor smallholders and development of farmer associations, assisting them in becoming viable rural organizations in terms of ownership, responsibility and sustainability”*.
- In **Madagascar**: although IFAD programmes and projects in Madagascar have a long history of support to grassroots organisations, no attempt had been made so far to work with apex national organisations. During the preparation of the new COSOP in 2006, IFAD initiated a dialogue with the 5 existing national FOs. A COSOP Focal Group of 25 members, including representatives from the five organisations, met at each stage of

the COSOP formulation process (preparation, field surveys, portfolio evaluation, orientation workshop, etc.). This resulted in dedicating one specific Strategic Objective of the COSOP to the support to FOs: “*Increased engagement of small-scale producers’ organizations in economic and policy development through professionalisation*”. This decision was supported by the Government and allowed IFAD to work with FOs more effectively and to foster their own empowerment.

16. The positive evolution described above is partly due to the adoption in 2006 of new guidelines for Results-Based COSOPs¹⁰ that foresees increased consultation with country-level stakeholders, including the rural poor and their organisations. It is also in line with IFAD’s Policy on Targeting approved in 2006 (See section 4.2 below), which foresees IFAD collaboration with FOs in the COSOP formulation process. The target established by IFAD Targeting Policy for the year 2009 is to reach 80% of the COSOP processes including formal national-level dialogue and negotiation with rural people’s organisations¹¹

1.2 FOs involvement in project design and implementation

Farmers’ Forum Recommendation: *FOs should be systematically involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of programmes and projects*

IFAD Commitment: *IFAD will seek increased FOs involvement in project/programmes design and implementation in consultation with governments. The level and frequency of national FOs involvement in project design and implementation will be closely monitored by IFAD and reported to the Farmers’ Forum.*

17. In 2006-2007 the Executive Board of IFAD approved 62 loan funded projects for a total amount of USD 1,055 million. Loan funded projects represent the bulk of IFAD operations and its main instrument to achieve its strategic objectives. Most of these resources are reaching rural poor people, communities and grassroots organisations under the form of technical and financial services, capacity building activities, inputs, equipments and infrastructures or matching grants for community driven micro-projects. These are public development projects and governments are the direct recipients and owners of IFAD loan funding. Participation of FOs can take place in the design, implementation and evaluation of IFAD projects, in agreement with Governments. In some cases FOs are actually managing one or more component of the projects.

18. The design of IFAD funded projects is based on consultations with rural communities and government institutions, through field mission, stakeholder workshops, participatory rural appraisal and other methods. Until recently however the formal participation of local and national FOs representatives in project design was more the exception than the rule. This section reports on achievements in this area for projects approved in 2006-2007¹². It should be taken into account that a significant share of the projects approved by the Board in 2006 was

¹⁰ Proposal for a Revised Framework for Results-Based Country Strategic Opportunities Programmes, September 2006, and Guidelines for preparation and implementation of a Results-Based Country Strategic Opportunities Programme, December 2006.

¹¹ IFAD Policy on Targeting, Results Framework, p. 17.

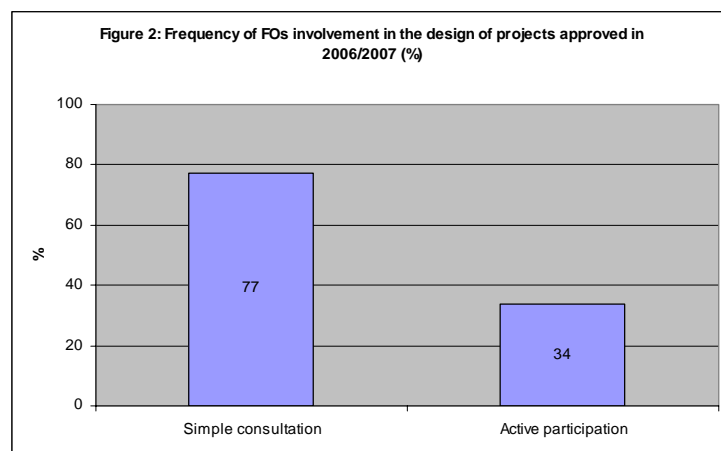
¹² The data are aggregated for 2006/2007, since the timeframe under consideration (two years) is two short to enable the identification of a trend in relatively long processes (over a year for design and 5 to 8 years for implementation). The complete data, recorded through a questionnaire addressed to each CPM, are presented in Annex 2.

actually designed before the first meeting of the Farmers' Forum. Furthermore, IFAD new guidelines for project design, which foresees a stronger involvement of FOs, have been approved only very recently (January 2008). Therefore the results presented below correspond more to a baseline situation for future comparison than to the outcome of recent changes in IFAD practice.

1.2.1 FOs involvement in project design

19. As for COSOP, the degree of FOs involvement in project design has been measured by two indicators: (i) frequency of "consultation" with FOs, which comprises any types of consultations; and (ii) frequency of "active participation", which may comprise the involvement of local or national FOs as members of the project design team, reviewers of design documents, participants in workshops and formal negotiations with Governments.

20. In 2006/2007, FOs have been involved in the design process - through different kind of consultation - in the large majority of projects approved (77%). However the degree of involvement is highly variable. "Active participation" occurred in about one third of the cases. Examples of those cases in which FOs participation has been fundamental for the design of the project are provided below.



- **In Madagascar** the formulation for the AROPA Project involved representatives of all five apex organisations throughout the whole design process, including during the field visits and culminated in a participatory workshop gathering government (3 ministries), donors (5 agencies), NGOs and farmers organisations (60 participants) where the components of the project were defined and detailed into activities. Similar involvement is forecasted in the next steps of the design of the programme, until its submission to IFAD's Executive Board
- **Mozambique** the national farmers' union (UNAC) is a member of the Design Reference Group for the Programme to Promote the Participation of the Poor in the Markets (4PM). The group includes representatives of the Government and the civil society and has been created to provide guidance throughout the whole design of the new program. It is being considered how to involve UNAC in the implementation of the program for the activities related to strengthening and capacity building of grassroots groups and associations.

21. In two cases, participation of FOs has been extended to the loan negotiations with the Government.

- **In Senegal**, in 2005, IFAD responded positively to the invitation by the CNCR (the national FOs platforms) of Senegal to join Phase II of the Agricultural Services and Producer Organisations Support Programme (PSAOP). IFAD's country programme team participated actively in formulation and appraisal of the PSAOP phase II and was instrumental in organizing an iterative process of consultations with a broad range of stakeholders. Representatives of CNCR participated in the drafting of the appraisal report and were members of the team that negotiated the loan agreement with IFAD.

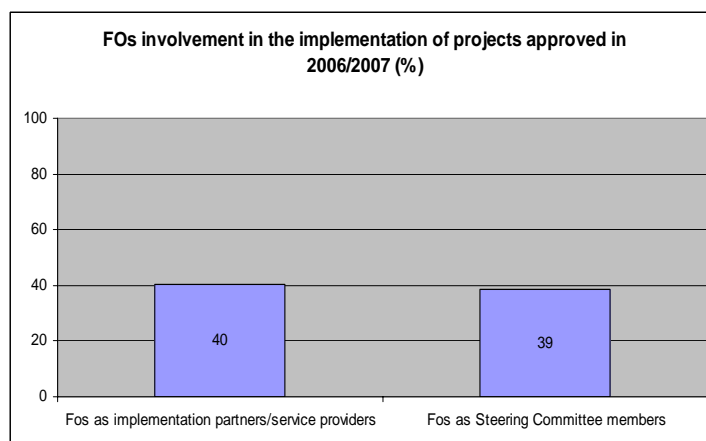
Implementation of the component “Support for farmers organisations” will be managed by national FOs themselves, through their technical wing – the Association Sénégalaise pour la Promotion du Développement à la Base (ASPRODEB).

- **In Nicaragua**, one of the specific objectives of the Value Chain and Market Access Project for Small Scale Producers, approved in September 2007, is to develop small scale producers’ capacities and strengthen their social and economic organizations. The National Union of Agricultural Producers (UNAG) participated in the project design and loan negotiation processes as member of the Steering Committee of the National Institute of Rural Development (IDR). The Association of Agricultural Workers (ATC) was also consulted. These organisations will continue being consulted during implementation and will implement some components of the project.

1.2.3 FOs involvement in project implementation

22. Two indicators of FOs involvement in project implementation are reported below: (i) The frequency of FOs participation as project implementation partners or service providers (which implies a contractual agreement between the project management unit and the Farmer Organisation) and (ii) The frequency of FOs participation as members of the project’s Steering Committee.

23. Figure 3 shows that FOs are involved in 40% of the project as implementation partners or service providers for at least one component projects. In 39% of the cases, at least one FO is member of the project Steering Committee. Actual involvement in the project implementation is highly variable. Some examples are presented below.



- **In Kenya**, the Smallholder Horticulture Marketing Programme (SHMP) is built upon the KENFAP network from grassroots to national level, providing services to smallholder farmers (such as input distribution, sale of produce, access to financial services and extension) and advocating for supportive policies. In the programme, KENFAP is in charge of strengthening farmer groups in irrigation schemes for the production of fruits and vegetables for export. It is envisaged that KENFAP will play a growing role in the implementation of IFAD supported programmes and in delivery of agricultural services as more and more public services are privatised.
- **In China**, one of the main objectives of the Xingjian Uygur Autonomous Region Modular Rural Development Programme (XUAR – MRDP) is to provide the domestic market (including Beijing and Shanghai) with organic products. The programme aims at developing FOs capacities for both production and marketing as well as empowering FOs as implementing agencies, in charge of quality control and certification of organic products. Their technical and organisational skills will be reinforced through capacity building activities and specific training.
- **In Argentina**, the Rural Areas Development Programme aims at contributing to the sustainable reduction of rural poverty in ten provinces. The programme activities

include the empowerment of producers' organisations and groups that have high percentage of women and youth members, facilitating access to business support services and support institutional strengthening and policy dialogue in favour of poor rural people. The Federación Agraria Argentina (FAA) plays a major role in the implementation of the programme.

24. New guidelines for project design have been recently approved, and will be mainstreamed in 2008. They foresee FOs as key country stakeholders and as members of the Country Programme Management Team, which will serve as a resource group, adding value to the design and implementation of IFAD country programmes and projects. The CPMT will be configured by the Country Programme Manager with a view to both mobilising technical expertise relevant to the nature of the project and to ensuring an effective participation of prospective implementers, partners and stakeholders in the specific project¹³.

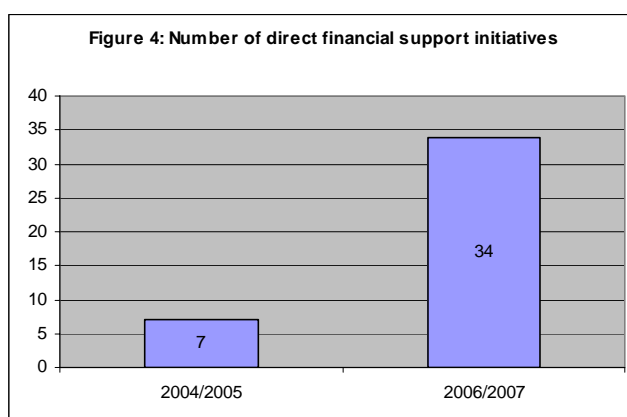
2. DIRECT FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO FARMERS ORGANISATIONS

Recommendation of the Farmers' Forum: IFAD to support FOs' own capacity-building efforts, both at national and regional levels through direct financing and according to their own priorities.

IFAD Commitment: first, closely monitor progress in this area of direct financing to FOs; and second, at least double the number and volume of capacity building grants to FOs in 2006-2007, compared to the two previous years.

25. Direct financing of FOs' own projects includes cases where FOs are formal, direct recipients of funds, as well as initiatives where the recipient is designated by the beneficiary organisation when the latter cannot be the formal recipient (for reasons related to their institutional, administrative, or legal status).

26. The Grant facility is IFAD's main instrument for direct financing of FOs own projects. Direct financial support has been provided also through supplementary funds¹⁴, direct "institutional contracts" with FOs and demand led technical assistance. The data and the examples developed below show that in the biennium 2006-2007 both the number and volume of direct financial support to FOs have more than doubled, largely fulfilling the commitments mentioned above.

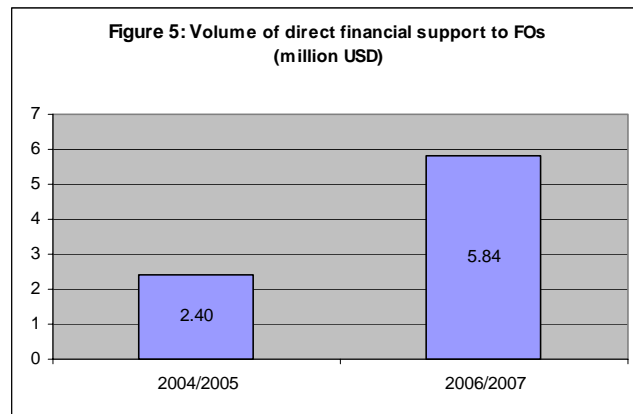


Support to FOs provided through loan-funded projects (which is by far the largest part) is not considered in this section as it goes through Governments (see section 1.2 above).

¹³ See Draft Guidelines for Project Design, December 2007, and Final Progress Report on Implementation of IFAD's Action Plan to Improve its Development Effectiveness, December 2007.

¹⁴ Supplementary Funds are extra-budgetary resources provided by IFAD Member States for specific programmes or activities. The agreement between the donor and IFAD designates the Fund as administrator and defines the terms and conditions for the use of the funds.

27. The number of direct financing initiatives has increased from 7 cases in 2004-2005 (for an amount of USD 2.4 million) to 34 cases in 2006/2007 (for an amount of USD 5.84 million).



28. In 2006/2007, direct financial support to FOs **at country level** was provided in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Senegal, Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria, Mozambique, Tanzania, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka

and Uruguay. In addition, the regional programme “Building Capacities of Farmers Organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa”¹⁵ implemented by IFAD and AGRICORD is strengthening organisational capacity of national farmers organisations on a demand led basis in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. These operations at country level reached a total volume of USD 1.96 million.

- **In Tanzania**, USD 120 000 have been provided in 2007 to the Network of Small-Scale Farmers’ Groups of Tanzania (MVIWATA) to support increased participation of farmers at local level in the process of planning, implementation and monitoring of the Agricultural Sector Development Programme (ASDP),
- **In Kenya**, the Kenya National Federation of Agricultural Producers (KENFAP) received in 2007 a grant of USD 225 000 to support the creation, management and lobbying capacity of district level unions.
- **In Nigeria**, in 2007 IFAD provided direct financial support and technical assistant to the United Small and Medium scale Farmers of Nigeria (USMEFAN) for the initial stages of its institutional development. This support included financing for the definition a five-year strategic plan and the first General Assembly of the organisation.

29. Other FOs initiatives have been supported **at regional or global levels** either for capacity building/institutional strengthening or for support to policy dialogue, for a total of USD 3.45 million for 21 initiatives over the biennium. The examples provided below focused on capacity building and institutional strengthening.

- **In Eastern and Southern Africa**, IFAD is currently supporting three sub-regional FOs and networks: the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU), for capacity building purposes, the Eastern African Farmers Federation (EAFF), to support it in the validation of its Strategic Framework by its members and the Eastern and Southern African Small-Scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF) for a regional training workshop and members' meeting.
- **In West Africa**, direct funding is provided to the Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs de l’Afrique de l’Ouest (ROPPA), for capacity building purposes.
- **In Asia**, a large regional large grant of USD 1.4 million named “Medium Term Cooperation Programme with Farmers’ Organisations in Asia and the Pacific” was designed and should start in 2008 (see box 1). A large component of it is dedicated to capacity building and institutional strengthening but the programme will also support policy dialogue.

¹⁵ This programme is co-financed by IFAD and the Italian Supplementary Fund

- In **South America**, IFAD provided a grant of USD 150 000 to the Coordinadora de Organizaciones de Productores Familiares del MERCOSUR (COPROFAM) through the FAA for “Strengthening of rural organizations for policy dialogue in the context of South America and MERCOSUR”. The project aims at strengthening COPROFAM’s policy and advocacy role at regional, national and international level.

Box 1: “Medium Term Cooperation Programme with Farmers’ Organisations in Asia and the Pacific”

During the design phase of the programme, a workshop was held in Bangkok to improve the involvement of FOs, obtain their feedback and include their comments in the design document. The overall goal of the programme is to strengthen the capacity of small farmers’ organisations (FOs) in the Asia and the Pacific region and their regional and international networks. The specific objectives are to: (i) develop FOs’ networking and knowledge management skills between themselves and with others at the national, regional and global levels and the development of a vision and strategy for strengthened future collaboration; (ii) facilitate and improve dialogue between FOs, national level policy making bodies and the regional integration schemes with the support of thematic studies and surveys and through consultations on the issues that have been identified and prioritized by the FOs and their members in the countries covered by the programme; (iii) promote the involvement of FOs in the IFAD country programmes in the Region organise and enhance consultation between IFAD Asia and the Pacific Division and the FOs in order to ensure strengthened and longer-term partnership with FOs under IFAD country programmes in the Region. This will include the profiling of some FOs and involving them in the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the various country programmes. The programme is finalised and has been endorsed by IFAD Senior Management. It will be submitted to the Executive Board in April 2008.

3. SUPPORT TO POLICY DIALOGUE AND ADVOCACY AT REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS

Farmers’ Forum Recommendation: IFAD should continue and broaden its support for the set-up of regional platforms for dialogue and negotiations between farmers’ organizations and governments within sub-regional and regional institutions involved in integration processes (e.g. REAF/MERCOSUR). It should also continue its support to regional consultations among farmers’ organizations in their lobbying and advocacy initiatives vis-à-vis these processes of integration and the development of regional common agricultural policies (e.g. support to FOs engagement in NEPAD Initiative).

IFAD Commitment: IFAD committed to extend the support already provided to the ASEAN areas and in the Central American CAFTA.

30. In three sub-regions, **policy dialogue platforms involving FOs** have been supported by IFAD.

31. In South America, the support to family Farmers' Organisations engagement in the MERCOSUR Special Commission on Family Agriculture (**REAF**), started in 2004 and is still ongoing. An assessment of this programme was carried in 2007 out and a second phase is contemplated.

Box 3: Preliminary results of the assessment of the REAF/MERCOSUR programme

The programme assessment has highlighted the impact of REAF activities at both regional and national levels. At the regional level, a significant achievement has been the approval by the Common Market Group (CMG) of Resolution 25/07 referred to as Guidelines for the Recognition and Identification of Family Farming in MERCOSUR. Equally important is the recognition of Family Farming by the Council of Agriculture Ministers (CAS). At the national level important results are: the establishment of an Under Secretariat of Rural Development and Family Agriculture in Argentina; the initiation of the process to register family farmers in Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay; the creation of agricultural insurance mechanisms and of an office to deal with managing agricultural risks in Paraguay, as well as an agreement to improve trade among MERCOSUR countries in products such as maize, tomatoes, dairy products, hogs and onions.

In terms of policy dialogue, stakeholders indicated that one of the most important achievements of the REAF programme was the enhancement of dialogue, both politically and in technical terms, between government authorities and civil society organizations. They noted that the REAF is the only existing space in the MERCOSUR allowing civil society to participate in discussions and decisions related to family farming.

32. In **Central America**, a *Programme for strengthening rural organisations for policy dialogue in the context of the Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA)* has been approved funded by a USD 800 000 grant to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (CIDH – IACHR). The programme will create a formal space for policy dialogue and the development of instruments that can be of use to both small farmers' organizations and national Governments. In February 2006, Central American small-scale farmer organizations started a process aimed at strengthening their organizations and forming alliances in order to increase their participation in policy dialogue. It highlighted the concerns of small farmers' organisations over risks and opportunities of free trade. FOs underlined the need to improve the Centro-American Agricultural Policy (PACA), including differentiated policies for smallholder farmers and family farming; and involving rural women and indigenous people in the consultations.

33. In **West and Central Africa**, the first phase of the support to the "Hub Rural – Supporting Rural development in Western and central Africa" has been evaluated. The Hub is financed by IFAD and other donors. Its goal is to assist West and Central African stakeholders (States, Inter-governmental Organisations, CSOs and Development Partners) to promote coherence in rural development programmes. One of the main objectives of the Hub is to assist FOs in the sub-region to play their role and to be involved in negotiations and decision-making processes. FOs have been involved in the evaluation of phase I and design of the second phase.

34. During 2006-2007 IFAD provided support to FOs in five **international advocacy campaigns or policy dialogue and research initiatives**.

35. The international conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (**ICARRD**) organized by FAO and the Government of Brazil (Porto Alegre, March 2006) aimed at discussing land-related development issues at a global level. A parallel Civil Society Forum was sponsored by ICARRD organisers. IFAD provided a grant of USD 160 000 to the IPC¹⁶ to support the participation of farmers and grassroots organizations. Its objective was to give space to civil society to discuss their views on agrarian reform, bring their recommendations to the plenary of ICARRD and integrating them into the final ICARRD declaration.

36. IFAD supported the participations of FOs in the preparatory consultations for the **World Development Report 2008: Agriculture for Development (WDR 08)** of the World Bank. Together with the French Government it sponsored the "Consultative workshop with Rural Producer Organizations" in Paris. The workshop brought together farmers' leaders from

¹⁶ IPC: International NGO/CSO Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC)

Africa, Latin America and Asia, representatives of IFAP and various regional networks. It explored new challenges in the changing context in which smallholder farmers are operating, characterised by globalisation, supply chain integration, technological innovations and new institutional actors at the global level. Other workshops are scheduled in 2008 at regional level to discuss the recommendations of the WDR 08.

37. At the request of African farmers' organisations, IFAD, FAO and the EuropAfrica campaign collaborated in 2006 to support the engagement of FOs in the Mid-Term Review of the **Economic Partnership Agreements** (EPAs) negotiation between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) countries. The objective was to enable farmers to share their views and perceptions on EPAs with negotiators from ACP countries. ACP FOs (from Africa and the Caribbean) developed a joint position on the EPAs mid term review and presented it in various instances to representatives of ACP Governments, ACP regional institutions and European Commission. IFAD is providing direct financial support to each regional FO, for a total volume of USD 460 000, enabling them to develop an advocacy campaign which should bring together various actors, CSOs and governments, in favour of EPAs strongly oriented towards sustainable development.

38. In **West Africa**, IFAD supported ROPPA's initiative on food sovereignty in the sub-region, which took place in **Niamey** in November 2006. Farmer leaders, members of parliament, officials of ministries agriculture and trade, and researchers from 13 countries of West Africa, together with the authorities of ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS, technical and financial partners and NGOs participated to this Forum. Participants adopted the "Niamey call for food sovereignty in West Africa".

39. IFAD also supported the organisation of the **Nyeleni World Forum on Food Sovereignty** in Mali, in February 2007. The Coordination Nationale des Organisations Paysannes du Mali (CNOP) organized this global event together with La Via Campesina, Friend of the Earth International, ROPPA, WFFP, WFF and the International Planning Committee on Food Sovereignty (IPC). The objectives of the Forum were to raise awareness on the concept of "food sovereignty"; provide space for farmers, landless people, artisanal fishers, pastoralists, indigenous peoples, migrants and consumers to debate and share experiences; build the capacity of the participants to campaign for food sovereignty; and develop a strategy for a global campaign over the next 5 years.

40. A research program has been designed by IFAP with support of the European Consortium for Agricultural Research in the Tropics (ECART) to **empower smallholder farmers in the market**. The objective of the programme is to document and use FOs experiences in market access that have the potential to be replicated in developing countries. The research is undertaken in collaboration with farmers' organisations. The results will inform dialogue for both policy changes and future support programmes. IFAD provided a grant of USD 150 000 to support the inception phase of the program in 2007.

4. FARMERS ORGANISATIONS IN IFAD POLICIES

Farmers Forum Recommendation: National FOs to be considered key actors in the empowerment of the rural poor within IFAD's new Strategic Framework.

41. The goal of the new **Strategic Framework 2007-2010** approved in December 2006, is to "empower poor rural women and men in developing countries to achieve higher incomes and improved food security". The strategic objectives are to ensure that poor rural people have better access to, and the skills and organisation they need to take advantage of, natural resources, improved technologies and production services, financial services, agricultural

markets, off farm activities and local and national policies and programming processes. The Strategic Framework acknowledges that “By building their own collective organizations (the rural poor people) can better manage assets, negotiate with market intermediaries, and access economic opportunities, service providers and government officials”. Therefore, IFAD will work with, and help strengthen the capacity of organizations formed by, and of, poor rural people.

42. IFAD’s Policy on Targeting was approved in September 2006. It aims at providing a clear definition of IFAD’s target group, outline the general principles to identify it, and provides an overview of how targeting will be addressed in the context of IFAD’s operations. The approach to targeting requires the inclusive and informed participation of rural poor people and their organizations, not as objects of diagnosis, but as active contributors. To this aim, IFAD commits to create the necessary space for this to happen, as well as to build the capacity of those organizations to engage with, and influence, the democratic processes that determine policies and programmes for poverty reduction and development.

43. The Policy on Targeting states that IFAD will seek to ensure that sector-wide programmes work for rural poor people, forging partnerships with producers’ organizations to strengthen their capacity to articulate their own requirements for change, influence decisions and participate in monitoring results. It will also seek to strengthen their capacity to exercise control over service providers. Furthermore, IFAD will support the direct involvement of poor people and their organizations in the formulation and implementation of national policies that have an impact on their livelihoods. The systematic participation of rural people’s organizations in designing, managing, monitoring and evaluating IFAD-supported operations is considered by the Policy as a stepping stone for their broader involvement in national policy processes.

Farmers Forum Recommendation: IFAD to put access to natural resources on the agendas at all levels. Facilitate dialogue between governments and representatives of small farmers and pastoralists, rural women, indigenous peoples, coastal communities, and other marginalized groups and to provide support services to beneficiaries of agrarian reform so that they can make productive use of their lands. In certain countries, help regularize land use and/or ownership rights. And strengthen the capacity of people’s organizations in order for them to participate in land policy formulation, implementation, enforcement and evaluation.

IFAD Commitment: IFAD is already engaged in this area, including with IFAP as co-founding members of the ILC. We will further increase our efforts in this area and this is why we are currently developing our own policy on support to equitable access to land and natural resources.

44. In 2007 IFAD developed a policy on land issues: Promoting Equitable Access to Land and Tenure Security for Rural Poverty Reduction. A draft of this policy will be presented for discussion at the global meeting of the Farmers’ Forum in February 2008.

5. THE FARMERS’ FORUM PROCESS ITSELF

Farmers’ Forum Recommendation: The 2006-2008 cycle of the Farmers’ Forum will comprise a significant number of national consultations in each region, to be fed into regional or sub-regional forums, before the 2008 Governing Council. The planning of these consultations should be elaborated region by region together with regional and international organizations.

IFAD Commitment: IFAD committed itself to organise 20 national level consultations by the end of 2007 and four regional or sub-regional consultations before the 2008 GC. The quality

of these consultations and of their outcomes depends very much upon Farmers' Organisations that need time to prepare and consult their members. Accordingly these consultations will be planned ahead of time.

46. In 2006-2007 national level consultations with FOs were organised in 13 countries, mostly in the framework of COSOP formulation processes (see section 1.1 above) although not exclusively (as in the case of Argentina).

47. At regional level, one consultation for Sub-Saharan Africa was organised in Cotonou, Benin, in April 2007 (in conjunction with the meeting of the Regional Committee of IFAP). Fifty representatives of African FOs and 8 IFAD staff met for a one-day workshop¹⁷. The consultation aimed at sharing ideas and information on: (i) the partnership processes launched so far, taking stock of achievements and areas needing improvement; (ii) the steps needed to strengthen cooperation at national and regional levels – including an agreement on the methodological approach to kick-start and/or deepen the collaboration between IFAD and FOs on IFAD-supported operations and country programmes; (iii) feedback and suggestions from FOs on how IFAD could improve its support to capacity-building efforts of national FOs¹⁸.

48. In the other regions, the participation of IFAD staff in various regional events and workshops has been an opportunity for exchange with farmers' representatives on how to strengthen partnerships. For example, IFAD staff participated to the following meetings:

- The IFAP Regional Committee Meeting for Asia in Hanoi (6/8 November 2007), where IFAD had the opportunity to start promoting its projects in Vietnam and the coming COSOP
- The Asia and the Pacific Division (PI) portfolio review: in 2007 PI invited 5 FOs (IFAP, La Via Campesina, AFA, SEWA and MONLAR) at an annual workshop in Bangkok to discuss the portfolio review with IFAD-funded programmes' coordinators.
- In Latin America, all bi-annual meetings of the REAF/MERCOSUR during 2006-07.

Farmers' Forum Recommendation: *coordination with other international agencies, in particular with FAO, would strengthen the process of the Forum and minimize the demands on the time and resources of farmers' organizations.*

49. Coordination has been developed with FAO, particularly for the support to the EPAs review process (see above). A large programme to support African FOs is currently being prepared by IFAD, FAO and the regional FO networks from Africa to be presented to the European Commission for funding. This project, if approved, will be managed jointly by IFAD and FAO under a steering committee gathering all main stakeholders (FOs, IFAD, FAO, and NGOs).

50. A special meeting will be organised as side event of the Farmers' Forum in February 2008, to discuss ways to further strengthen tripartite partnership between FAO, IFAD and farmers organisations.

Farmers' Forum Recommendation: *the interface between the Farmers' Forum and IFAD's Governing Council must be institutionalized. The participants of the Forum proposed the development of agreed-upon principles of engagement or code of conduct to guide interactions and partnerships between farmers' organizations and IFAD.*

¹⁷ Report of the Regional Consultation – The Farmers' Forum in Sub-Saharan Africa, Cotonou, Benin, 20 March 2007.

¹⁸ The report of this consultation is available and has been distributed to the participants in the Farmers' Forum 2008.

IFAD Commitment: *the initiative of the Farmers Forum in conjunction with the Governing Council is de facto institutionalized. IFAD is working on principles of engagement with FOs. After consultation with international and regional networks, they will be part of our policy on partnership with farmers' organisations. We see these principles of engagement as a joint commitment to transparency and effectiveness in the use of resources and accountability to our respective constituencies.*

51. The organisation of the second meeting of the Farmers' Forum in conjunction with the 31th session of the Governing Council is a confirmation of its institutionalisation. The principles of engagement as part of an IFAD policy on partnership with FOs, are still a work in progress. A first draft has been produced that will be shared with the Steering Committee of the Farmers Forum in 2008. .

6. CONCLUSION AND ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

52. Most of the recommendations expressed in 2006 by Farmers' Organisations representatives have been taken into account by IFAD and most of the commitments taken in 2006 have been fulfilled, at least partially. This report shows that the Farmers' Forum is already much more than a dialogue process. It has tangible effects on the way IFAD and FOs work together at all levels.

53. New collaborations and partnerships have started at local, national and regional levels. FOs are recognised as key actors in the empowerment of rural poor people within IFAD's Strategic Framework and in recent policy papers or operational guidelines. The impact of this growing collaboration will have to be jointly assessed in due time. But further progress is needed in different domains. From IFAD side, some issues listed below deserve specific discussion.

54. The progress achieved in the biennium 2006/2007 in relation to **FOs involvement in the formulation of IFAD country strategies (COSOP)** is encouraging and the effort must be pursued. But the modalities and effectiveness of this dialogue and consultation in country strategies should be discussed. **What are the respective expectations from IFAD and FOs? Are the modalities of these consultations satisfactory? What is the assessment by FOs and by IFAD staff of their interaction in COSOP processes in 2006-2007?**

55. **FOs participation in project design and implementation** could increase further, both in frequency and in scope. National FOs, governments and IFAD have a mutual interest in strengthening partnership in development projects. Most IFAD supported projects are delivering services at grassroots level. FOs involvement in projects can contribute to the quality, relevance, efficiency and sustainability of these services. By strengthening the links between local groups and national federations it could empower both. A typical case is the Farmers Field Schools (FFS) model supported by FAO and IFAD. In some countries FFS are rapidly expanding and are engaged in a federative process that could benefit from the support of national farmers unions. **In this regard, which lessons can be drawn for the various experiences and modalities of operational partnership in development projects?**

56. While the number and volume of **direct financial support to FOs**, mostly for capacity building programmes, have increased, the amount of grant funding to FOs remains relatively low when compared to the total volume of grants allocated by IFAD (about USD 40 million per year). Progress is possible on this front. But, on IFAD side, further multiplication of small grants to single local or national FOs for capacity building purpose would imply a growing administrative cost (design and approval process but also follow-up and reporting) and may

soon reach its limit. IFAD may have an interest in providing larger but fewer capacity building grants through regional umbrella organisations and regional (or sub-regional) programmes targeting national level capacity building. FOs may have the same interest.

57. A number of models have been developed so far¹⁹ and others are currently being discussed. Although It may be too soon to undertake a comparative analysis of these models, some issues deserve discussion in the Forum: **How to ensure that medium to large capacity building programs at regional levels are effectively and efficiently serving national and local level organisations and ultimately the small scale producers at village level? Where is the right balance between subsidiarity and efficiency in channelling funds? Between inclusiveness, cooperation and competition among FOs' groupings? How to strengthen capacities of regional networks to manage these programs without creating new bureaucracy depending on international funding?**

58. The Farmers Forum was conceived in 2005 as an “on-going bottom-up process”. The process is to “start with national-level consultations that feed into regional or sub-regional meetings. The latter will then shape the content of, and the participation in, the Farmers’ Forum at the IFAD Governing Council”. In practice the Farmers’ Forum in 2006-2007 has not follow such a simple and systematic bottom-up process. Both on IFAD and Farmers Organisations sides, limited availability of time and resources and conflicting priorities resulted in a different set of events and consultations varying across countries and regions. **Should the “model” agreed upon in 2005, and confirmed in 2006, be reviewed and adjusted? There was an agreement that the Farmers Forum would “build upon existing forums where possible and avoid duplication in these cases”. Another (potentially conflicting) agreement was that the Forum would be “guided by the principles of inclusiveness, pluralism, openness and flexibility”. Were these principles fully complied with?**

59. From its creation, IFAD has been particularly engaged in the promotion of gender equality. Despite their major and sometime prominent role in agricultural production and household food security, women farmers are still few among the leadership of national and international farmers’ organisations. **How the partnership between IFAD and FOs could contribute to the promotion of women leadership in rural organisation?**

60. This report to the Farmers Forum - the first of its kind - has not addressed the issue of the development effectiveness of IFAD-FOs partnership, of its impact on smallholder farmers organisational capacities, on the empowerment of rural women and men and ultimately on the reduction of rural poverty. **Could and should the participants in the Farmers’ Forum engaged in the development of a joint monitoring and evaluation system of the effectiveness of their partnership?**

61. The dialogue and cooperation between IFAD and FOs is growing but is still highly variable across countries. It depends upon the more or less supportive attitude of the governments and upon the personal engagement of IFAD staff members and project managers. It also depends on the representativeness and capacity of Farmers Organisations, on their willingness to engage with their government in development programmes and to work together among themselves when the majority of rural poor people remain marginalised and face enormous asymmetries of power on agricultural markets as in public policy making processes. How this partnership can be further developed and improved to the benefit of smallholder farmers, pastoralists and fisherfolks will the focus of the second global meeting of the Farmers’ Forum.

¹⁹ Agreement with AGRICORD on sub-Saharan Africa; agreement with IFAP, LVC, AFA and SEWA in Asia. Sub regional programmes with SACAU and ROPPA.

Appendix 1

Degree of FOs involvement in COSOPs	2006	2007	Total 2006/2007
All types of consultation	7	13	20
Active participation	3	9	12
Specific strategic objective in the COSP dedicated to FOs	3	7	10
Total number of COSOPs approved	9	15	24

FOs' involvement in project design	2006	2007	2006/2007
All type of consultation	21	27	48
Active participation	10	11	21
Total number of projects approved	27	35	62

FOs' involvement in project implementation	2006	2007	2006/2007
FOs as implementation partners /service providers	12	13	25
FO as Steering Committee members	12	12	24
Total number of projects approved	27	35	62

Annex 1

Extract of the address of Lennart Bage, President of IFAD to the 37th World Farmers Congress of IFAP, Seoul, 17 May 2006

Mr Chairman

(...)

The vast majority of poor and hungry people in this world are small-scale family farmers and landless rural workers. The problem they are facing is that of improving their livelihoods in the context of rapidly changing global market and new forms of competition for influence and resources. Until the rural poor are in a position to better address these challenges, the risk is that what brings prosperity to others will bring continued and deeper poverty to them.

While material investment is essential, we know that most of the key issues confronting small scale family farmers are mediated by relations with others. Consequently a critical element for development is institutional and organizational capacity-building among the poor themselves. Resource poor farmers must be empowered to respond to the challenges they face.

This is fundamental for us. We do not see the smallholder farmers as beneficiaries of international assistance but as citizens, small scale entrepreneurs, wealth producers. In fact the backbone in the quest for economic and social growth in most developing countries where agriculture is the major economic sector, the main employer and the main export earner. The rural poor must be subjects in their own life and not objects of someone else's welfare scheme. And you, Farmers Organisations, have a key role in their empowerment.

(...)

Common understanding and shared objectives between IFAD and Farmers Organisations were clearly stated at the first workshop we had with farmer leaders in February 2005 in Rome (...) at the initiative of ROPPA, IFAP and Via Campesina, to discuss the project of a Farmers Forum in Conjunction with IFAD Governing Council. This was an ambitious project. But what came out of this workshop is even more ambitious and promising. Not merely a periodic event but an ongoing bottom up process of consultation spanning operations on the ground and policy dialogue.

(...)

With the Farmers Forum process we are building a common and inclusive framework for regular interaction between IFAD, Farmers Organisations and our member Governments, from the country level to the global level. And we are now institutionalizing engagement with Farmers Organisations in some of our key operational processes. This is not only about dialogue and exchange of experience. This is about working together in the field, in development programmes and in shaping pro-poor policy frameworks.

I said an inclusive framework because we recognize the diversity and the diverse stage of development of the organisations that farmers and rural producers set up to represent their interests. This is about IFAP and other global networks of rural producers. It is also about sub-regional organisations such as ROPPA, SACAU or COPROFAM. And it is about the many national or local organisations that are not yet affiliated to any network and with whom we work through our field projects. We want the Farmers Forum process to be open to all of them.

Three months ago, in February 2006, the Farmers Forum met for the first time in conjunction with IFAD Governing Council. I met many of you on this occasion and we listened carefully to the statement you delivered at the plenary of the Governing Council.

Let me take this opportunity to respond here to the main requests and recommendations the Farmers Forum made to IFAD.

You called on IFAD to support your own capacity building efforts in the domain of policies. You called for direct support so that you empower your members to interact with the market in a more equitable and profitable way and you recommended direct financing for capacity building of farmers' organizations according to their own priorities.

As you know IFAD invests most of its resources as loans to member countries' governments for rural development projects. Many of these projects have entire components for capacity building of grassroots farmers' groups, water users associations, small cooperatives and rural finance institutions. As national Farmers' Organisations grow in membership and in capacity, an increasing part of these development projects can and should be designed together with them and implemented directly by them in agreement with governments. This is already occurring in a number of countries, including Mali, India, Romania and Senegal and it will increase.

IFAD also has a Grant facility. This is the instrument we can use for direct financing to FOs. We have already approved some regional programmes in this direction, particularly in Africa, including a joint programme with AgriCord and we are currently preparing others in south-east Asia and Latin America. The number of our small grants directed to national FOs is also increasing.

In this regard we commit to: First, closely monitor progress in this area of direct financing to Farmers' organisations; Second, at least double the number and volume of capacity building grants to FOs in 2006-2007, compared to the last two years. Areas of collaborations will be identified through national and regional consultations within the Farmers' Forum process. We also have a lot of expectations from our new partnership with Agricorn.

Increasing direct grant financing to national FOs would be facilitated by the discussion of project proposals at an early stage in the development of our country strategies and country programme cycle and by an improvement of the quality of project proposals submitted to IFAD by national Farmers Organisations.

You recommended that farmers' organizations participate – and in all cases, be at least consulted - in the development of IFAD's strategies at both the national and regional levels.

We agree with the principle of *systematic consultation* with FOs in the preparation of our country strategy papers. We will do this in countries where appropriate national organisations exist. This is already occurring in Syria to Nicaragua, Madagascar, Egypt and Senegal and will be part of the forthcoming policy on IFAD partnership with Farmers' organisations. We will also go from consultation to *active participation* where capacity exists and in agreement with governments. .

You recommended that FOs be systematically involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of IFAD funded projects.

IFAD will seek increased Farmers Organisations involvement in project/programmes design and implementation in consultation with governments. The level and frequency of national farmers' organisations involvement in project design and implementation will be *closely monitored* by IFAD and reported to the Farmers' Forum.

You recommended that the first cycle of the Farmers' Forum (2006-2008) will comprise a significant number of national consultations in each region, to be fed-into regional or sub-regional fora, before the 2008 Governing Council

We commit ourselves to organise 20 national level consultations by the end of 2007 and four regional or sub-regional consultations before the 2008 Governing Council. The quality of these consultations and of their outcomes depends very much upon Farmers' Organisations. We know you need time to prepare yourselves and consult your members. Accordingly these consultations will be planned ahead of time.

You recommended institutionalization of the interface between the Farmers' Forum and IFAD's Governing Council.

The initiative of the Farmers Forum in conjunction with the Governing Council has been well received by the Governors of IFAD and is de facto institutionalized. I said it very clearly in my concluding statement to the GC plenary in February. This will be further formalized.

You proposed the development of agreed-upon principles of engagement or code of conduct to guide interactions and partnerships between farmers' organizations and IFAD

We are working on that and these principles of engagement will, after consultation with IFAP and the other international and regional networks, be attached to our policy on partnership with farmers organisations. We see these principles of engagement as a joint commitment to transparency and effectiveness in the use of resources and accountability to our respective constituencies. This point is essential for us. Aid creates donor dependency and too often affects accountability to the people institutions are meant to serve.

The farmers' forum recommended to put access to natural resources, land and water, on the agendas at all levels, and facilitate dialogue between governments and representatives of small farmers, rural women, indigenous peoples, coastal communities, and other marginalized groups. You call on IFAD to provide support services to beneficiaries of agrarian reform and in certain countries, to help regularise user and/or ownership rights.

IFAD is already engaged in this area, including with IFAP as co-founding members of the International Land Coalition. We will further increase our efforts in this area and this is why we are currently developing our own policy on support to equitable access to land and natural resources. IFAD supported the recent ICARRD conference in Porto Alegre and we are working on its follow up together with FAO and the International Planning Commission (IPC) in which IFAP and other farmers organisations are represented.

You recommended that IFAD should support the undertaking of an evaluation of the impact of regional market integration policies and market liberalization on family agriculture and the livelihoods of the rural poor.

We recognise the importance and usefulness of such an initiative. This is beyond the sole capacity of IFAD, but we will develop partnership with other international or regional institutions in this area. We are undertaking with IFPRI a study on the impact of trade liberalization on smallholders in the Near East and North Africa region. We are currently working on a joint initiative with FAO to support the ACP secretariat and sub-regional Farmers' networks in ACP regions for the mid term review of the Economic Partnership Agreements process with EU.

You call on IFAD to continue and broaden its support to the set-up of regional platforms of dialogue and negotiations between farmers' organizations and governments within sub-regional and regional institutions.

IFAD is supporting family Farmers' Organisations engagement in the MERCOSUR commission on family agriculture (REAF). In West and Central Africa we work in partnership with other donors and Farmers Organisations in the sub-regional rural development "Hub". We are currently discussing partnership with Producers' Organisations in the ASEAN areas and in the Central American CAFTA.

Finally, during the Farmers Forum, we discussed with you, Mr Wilkinson, the idea of working together with IFAP and the European Consortium for Agricultural Research in the Tropics (ECART), on successful models for empowering producers in markets and for managing risks in family agriculture.

We received recently from you two research proposals, both of great relevance and interest given the rapid and worrying concentration of agrifood supply chains and evolution of markets. We appreciate very much this idea of tripartite partnership between IFAD, Farmers Organisations and Research Institutions. Our staff is currently reviewing these proposals and should, as soon as possible, meet with IFAP and ECART in order to reach an agreement on at least one project to start before the end of this year.