



# Eastern and Southern Africa

Half the people of eastern and southern Africa suffer the effects of poverty, and 85% of the poor of the region are located in rural areas with agriculture as their principal productive activity. The majority of the poor are found in areas with moderate-to-high agricultural potential and are food secure but cash poor; the poorest are chronically food insecure.

At the turn of the year 2000, the continuation of the peace processes and the resumption of normal economic activities in much of the Great Lakes area considerably reduced the profile of emergency assistance. The region has now begun to experience a period of relative calm.

Poor households tend to have neither cattle nor draught oxen, and farm sizes are of less than 0.5 ha. Poverty alleviation in the region has to focus on creating economic assets for the poor so that they can withstand stress events such as drought. The assets of farmer knowledge and organization help the poor reduce their vulnerability.

Smallholders and the rural poor have weak links to the market and have not yet benefited as fully as they could from economic liberalization following structural adjustment programmes. They need more responsive rural institutions to help them retain a larger share of the value of their production and to reach wider domestic and export markets. The withdrawal of the public sector from providing technological and other services to small farmers has left a vacuum that the private sector has yet to fill. The demise of the parastatal banks has left most rural smallholder producers with no access to capital to finance investments to raise farm productivity.

Conservation and sustainable agricultural practices are crucial for maintaining the natural resource base in the region. In more marginal areas, the poor need support for the conservation and management of common resources, while in higher-potential areas, smallholders need support for the intensification of production from existing resources such as soil and water.

## IFAD'S FOCUS

Investment in agriculture in the region has traditionally been "top-down". IFAD aims to play an advocacy role both with governments and donors by directing its own funding to areas identified by smallholders themselves. These include the following:

### RAISING HOUSEHOLD INCOMES AND IMPROVING FOOD SECURITY BY ENCOURAGING PRODUCTION OF HIGHER-VALUE CROPS

IFAD's approach in the region is centred on helping smallholders establish a viable position in commercial agriculture, using agriculture not only as a basis for food security but also as the foundation for income expansion and saving capacity. IFAD is addressing the complex issues surrounding access to wider markets for poor smallholders. The first such IFAD-financed interventions were approved in 1999, for Mozambique, Uganda and Zambia.

### IMPROVING SMALLHOLDER ACCESS TO QUALITY LAND

Inadequate land is often a direct result of historical patterns of land ownership. In Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, IFAD has influenced land legislation aimed at giving smallholders title to their land and supporting independent access to land by women. With the help of funds provided by the Norwegian Government, IFAD is now exploring options for community-based land reform in Zimbabwe. This initiative is a step forward in the strategy of establishing forms of land tenure that will encourage smallholder investment and production.

### STRENGTHENING NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION

This is a priority. Planned programmes focusing on the sustainable development of fragile areas include rangeland management in Eritrea and Rwanda, land husbandry and crop production in Ethiopia and soil fertility management and improvement in Malawi.

In Lesotho, an IFAD-backed soil and water conservation agroforestry programme used traditional production-cum-conservation techniques to reconcile short-term food production needs with long-term conservation aims. The system depended on intensive intercropping and was based on the crops local people had cultivated for more than 100 years – sorghum, maize, beans, wheat and pumpkin – with potato and watermelon added as cash crops. The exclusive use of organic fertilizers and the use of household waste answered conservation and profitability needs. During the 1990s, the number of farmers using the system increased from 22 to 2 000, and by 1996 the scheme was self-sufficient.

### STRENGTHENING ORGANIZATIONS OF THE POOR

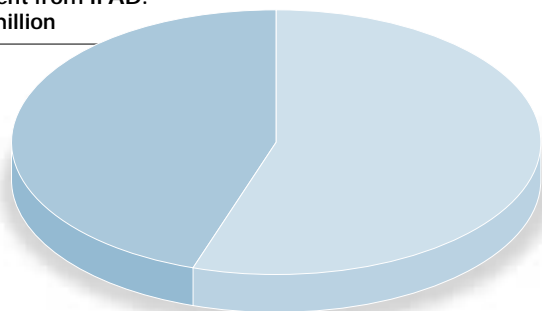
Equitable market relations, access to and management of resources: both require the empowerment of the poor to pursue and negotiate their own objectives. Strengthening organizations for empowerment of the poor – men and women – is at the heart of IFAD's strategy. In the area of rural finance, this means building local savings and loan capacities controlled by the rural poor (as in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda). In the area of land and water, it means providing support to community-level resource management (as in Lesotho and Zambia) and to water-user associations in irrigation (as in Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Ethiopia). In marketing, it means support to producer groups capable of negotiating with traders and processors (as in Uganda, Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique). In local governance, it means decentralization and support to the poor to effectively participate in decision-making (as in Eritrea, Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda). In every area, equity requires accountability, and accountability reflects influence. The objective is not only to create institutions that are pro-poor, but institutions that the poor can directly influence, and in many cases control.

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## NUMBER OF IFAD ONGOING PROJECTS IN THE REGION: 42

TOTAL INVESTMENT IN THE REGION: USD 995.9 MILLION

Total investment from IFAD:  
USD 467.9 million



Total investment from other external sources, borrower governments and beneficiaries: USD 528 million

IFAD's principal cofinancing partners in the region: the World Bank, African Development Bank (AfDB), Belgium, OPEC Fund, the United States and the Global Environment Facility.