



# IFAD's purpose

The goal of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is to enable poor rural people to improve their food and nutrition security, increase their incomes and strengthen their resilience. IFAD also acts as an advocate for poor rural women and men. Our multilateral orientation provides a strong global platform for discussing rural policy issues and increasing awareness of why investment in agriculture and rural development is critical to reducing poverty and improving global food security.

## Where we work<sup>1</sup>

- West and Central Africa: 22 countries with 52 ongoing programmes and projects
- East and Southern Africa: 18 countries with 44 ongoing programmes and projects
- Asia and the Pacific: 18 countries with 60 ongoing programmes and projects
- Latin America and the Caribbean: 19 countries with 41 ongoing programmes and projects
- Near East, North Africa and Europe: 19 countries with 44 ongoing programmes and projects

## How we work

**Partnerships** are central to everything IFAD does. The Fund is a unique partnership of members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), other developing countries, and member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Our partners include Member States; civil society organizations, particularly those of smallholder farmers and rural people; United Nations agencies; bilateral and multilateral development agencies; international agricultural research centres; NGOs and foundations; policy research institutes and universities; regional organizations; and the private sector. Collaboration at the global, regional, national and local levels is part of virtually every aspect of our work. IFAD also brokers partnerships among the diverse parties working in development – particularly governments, farmers' organizations and private-sector players – and for South-South cooperation.

<sup>1</sup> As at 31 December 2013.

# Major achievements

## Agricultural production and productivity

Helping farmers increase agricultural production and productivity is a priority of many IFAD-supported projects. And farmers must also be linked to markets so they can profit from what they grow.

Results reported in 2013 include:

- 4.5 million people trained to use improved agricultural practices and technologies
- 3.2 million hectares of common-property resource land under improved management
- 15,000 kilometres of roads constructed or repaired
- 20,000 marketing groups formed or strengthened
- 1.5 million people trained in business and entrepreneurship

## Climate and environment

Environmental degradation, which is being accelerated by climate change, is a particular problem for poor rural people. Rising sea levels and more intense droughts, storms and floods are putting increasing pressure on the ecosystems that they rely on.

IFAD promotes agricultural growth that is integrated into ecosystems rather than extractive, so that the land can provide for future generations. Its projects help smallholder farmers manage their land and become more resilient to the varied effects of climate change.



## **Inclusive rural finance**

Most of the world's 1.2 billion very poor people live without the security of reliable income, shelter or food. Saving or borrowing small amounts of money can make a big difference in their lives. IFAD is one of the world's largest lenders supporting inclusive rural finance for poverty reduction. The Fund promotes access to a range of financial services, including savings, payments, remittances and insurance, to meet the needs of poor rural people.

Results reported in 2013 include:

- 2.5 million active borrowers from IFAD-assisted microfinance institutions; 74 per cent were women
- 5.5 million voluntary savers; 71 per cent were women
- About 14 per cent of IFAD's portfolio is dedicated to rural finance

## **Women and nutrition**

Women are major contributors to agriculture and rural economies, yet they have significantly less access than men to services, markets and assets, including land. Rural women often lack authority in their homes, organizations and communities. IFAD works to give rural women greater equality with men and more control over their lives and assets. Rural women make up about half of all IFAD project participants.

Empowering women is an effective way to reduce chronic child malnutrition. When women earn money, they are more likely than men to spend it on food for the family. IFAD is also increasing its support to nutrition-sensitive agriculture and other efforts to improve diets and the nutritional status of poor rural people.

## **Reaching the unreached**

IFAD gives special attention to the most vulnerable in rural communities: young people, women and indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples account for about 5 per cent of the world's population but 15 per cent of those living in poverty. And 85 per cent of the world's young people (aged 15 to 24) live in developing countries, mainly in rural areas. IFAD's participatory, grass-roots approach to rural development and its considerable in-country experience gives the Fund a comparative advantage in working with vulnerable groups, especially in the most remote rural areas.

## Building institutions

To be sustainable, development cannot be imposed from the outside. The programmes and projects we finance are tailored to reinforce and amplify the effectiveness of national policies. We work closely with agriculture and finance ministries and related institutions to ensure that their support extends to smallholder farmers and their organizations, and that public spending for agriculture reaches the poorest people.

IFAD is also increasing its country presence to promote country ownership, leadership and accountability. We work to strengthen national and local capacities (including those of rural communities and civil society organizations) for improved design, management and impact of strategies and programmes.

## Impact of IFAD's investment

The Fund has:

- Mobilized around US\$22.8 billion in cofinancing and funding from domestic sources for rural development, in addition to IFAD's contribution of about US\$15.6 billion in loans and grants
- Supported 948 programmes and projects in partnership with 120 recipient governments
- Empowered approximately 420 million people to grow more food, better manage their land and other natural resources, learn new skills, start small businesses, build strong organizations and gain a voice in the decisions that affect their lives



## What is IFAD?

IFAD is an international financial institution and a specialized United Nations agency dedicated to eradicating poverty and hunger in rural areas of developing countries. IFAD provides low-interest loans and grants to developing countries to finance innovative agricultural and rural development programmes and projects. It is among the top multilateral institutions working in agriculture in Africa. In 2013, more than half of new IFAD financing went to sub-Saharan Africa.

The decision to create IFAD was made in 1974 in the wake of the great droughts and famines that struck Africa and Asia in the preceding years. At the 1974 World Food Conference, world leaders agreed that “an international fund ... should be established immediately to finance agricultural development projects”.

IFAD has a total membership of 172 countries from around the world including OPEC and OECD members, and developing and middle-income countries.

IFAD brings the point of view of smallholder farmers and rural entrepreneurs to bear on international policy deliberations, and builds their capacity so that they themselves can engage in and influence relevant policy processes.

IFAD has its headquarters in Rome, Italy.



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