

### **Annual report 2020: 123 million rural people reached as IFAD steps up fight against hunger, poverty and exclusion**

**Rome, 29 July 2021** - As the COVID-19 pandemic raged around the world pushing millions more people into hunger and poverty, the UN's International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) increased its support for the most vulnerable and marginalized people, according to the [IFAD Annual Report 2020](#) released today.

With 203 ongoing projects and total financing of US\$7.5 billion, IFAD was able to reach 123 million people in 2020.

“Despite the challenges of 2020, we remain convinced that our vision of a world free of poverty and hunger is attainable and should remain in focus,” said Gilbert F. Houngbo, President of IFAD. “Doing more to build the resilience of rural people does not only mean scaling up investments. It also means going further to reach the people most likely to be left behind, to ensure the rural women and men IFAD serves are better prepared to overcome the challenges they face.”

As the impacts of the pandemic threatened to roll back years of development progress, disrupt food system and cause a secondary “hunger pandemic”, IFAD country teams immediately began working with governments to adjust ongoing projects so rural people could maintain their income-generating activities and not be forced to sell their meagre assets.

IFAD works in 35 countries across Asia-Pacific, with 55 ongoing programmes and projects for a total investment of US\$2.55 billion. This includes an additional US\$ 365.8 million approved in 2020.

Rural people in Asia and the Pacific are facing a range of challenges and threats, with climate-related hazards being among the most severe. For groups who have traditionally faced exclusion, these threats are exacerbated. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have added to existing vulnerabilities, undermining food systems and livelihoods in the region.

Building resilience to multiple threats is a priority for IFAD in its work in Asia and the Pacific. Inclusion is a strong theme across our portfolio, with women, youth and ethnic minorities receiving particular attention.

In April 2020, IFAD launched the Rural Poor Stimulus Facility (RPSF) with support from its Executive Board and member states such as Canada and Germany that made contributions. The Facility has helped rural people hang on to their livelihoods in this difficult period while also maintaining the supply of food. With supply chains and transportation disrupted, small-scale farmers have received seeds, fertilizer and other support to continue planting and

production. Support for digital services like e-marketing and e-money were increased. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal, Pacific Islands, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea are among the countries to receive assistance from the RPSF.

In 2020 IFAD stepped up its work with particularly marginalized groups including women, youth, disabled persons and indigenous peoples. New grass-roots activities were started, and 10 times as many people participated in the Fifth Global Meeting of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum as ever before.

The report outlines how IFAD is revamping its financial infrastructure to be able to invest more and reach more rural people while managing risks. In 2020 IFAD obtained AA+ credit ratings from Fitch and Standard and Poor's, creating opportunities to mobilize more resources. Ongoing decentralization, with a third of IFAD staff now in the field, means that IFAD can increase partnerships and policy engagement and improve results by being closer to its clients.

IFAD received record commitments of funding from Member States following the launch of the Twelfth Replenishment of its resources (IFAD12) in February 2020, with the goal of doubling the Fund's impact by 2030. With a target programme of work of at least \$11 billion for 2022-2024, IFAD expects to raise the incomes of 83 million people by at least 20 per cent. New programmes will increase attention to climate change impacts and resilience (ASAP+), and leverage new investment by the private sector (the Private Sector Financing Programme, or PSFP).

IFAD invests for long-term sustainable results and targets the root causes of hunger, poverty and marginalization. It works exclusively in rural areas, where three-quarters of the world's poorest and hungry people live. IFAD is bringing its experience to the preparations for the upcoming UN Food Systems Summit and is already planning how to help build back better after the pandemic, ensuring that food systems work for the people who work in them—especially the small-scale farmers who grow a third of the world's food.

#### **Note to Editor**

A digital report for a virtual age, [the IFAD Annual Report 2020](#) also shows the faces behind the numbers through regional video and stories.

#### **Media contacts**

Yamini Lohia  
Sub-regional Communications Analyst, South Asia  
Email: [y.lohia@ifad.org](mailto:y.lohia@ifad.org) | Phone: +91 9811109907

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*IFAD invests in rural people, empowering them to reduce poverty, increase food security, improve nutrition and strengthen resilience. Since 1978, we have provided about US\$23.2 billion in grants and low-interest loans to projects that have reached some 518 million people. IFAD is an international financial institution and a specialized United Nations agency based in Rome – the UN's food and agriculture hub.*