

**STATEMENT OF MR LUCIANO LAVIZZARI,
DIRECTOR OF IFAD'S OFFICE OF EVALUATION**

**NATIONAL ROUNDTABLE WORKSHOP
SUDAN COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION**

25-26 February, 2009

1. Honourable Minister of Finance;
2. Honourable Minister for Agriculture;
3. Authorities and Officials of the Government of Sudan and other Development Agencies; IFAD Colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to be here and have the opportunity to address the participants of this National Round Table Workshop, which has been jointly organized by the Government of Sudan and IFAD.

Let me start by saying that the focus of this workshop is very much on learning. Together we would like to deepen our understanding on a number of key issues that have emerged from the Sudan Country Programme Evaluation (CPE) that my office, the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD, undertook in 2008. The ultimate objective of this

evaluation is the development of a number of building blocks for the forthcoming Government of Sudan and IFAD Country strategy that you will be discussing tomorrow.

So what are the expected specific outcomes of this workshop?

Today and tomorrow we will be discussing the findings of the CPE, although we intend not to go into the details of the evaluation report. Instead we propose to devote time to the in-depth discussion of three topics:

- Agriculture for Rural Poverty Alleviation in Sudan;
- the Role of IFAD in Policy Dialogue in Sudan; and
- Enhancing Sustainability of Development Benefits.

The discussions during the workshop will also contribute to the preparation of the Agreement at Completion Point for the Sudan CPE. For those of you who are not familiar with this, the Agreement at Completion Point is a short document prepared after the workshop that will contain the main findings and recommendations from the evaluation, which both the Government of Sudan and IFAD agree to adopt and implement within specified timeframes.

I would now like to turn to some of the main findings from the Sudan CPE. While there are areas requiring improvements that have been pointed out in the evaluation, I wish to highlight the many achievements

of the Government of Sudan and IFAD Cooperation Programme over the last fourteen years.

The evaluation indicates that the overall achievement of the Programme is generally satisfactory.

The Sudan Country Programme brought hope to largely marginalized populations following a period of conflict in some areas, and much needed support to state governments and localities where few other donors existed. It provided them with hands-on experience in innovative areas such as the newly formed Community Development Committees. IFAD has assisted in the introduction of improved agricultural practices, seed varieties and livestock which have enhanced incomes, food security and nutrition. There has been emphasis put on enhancing extension services at the lower administrative levels, and even at village level such as, for example, for paravets and midwives. There has been an increase in the establishment and improvements of local organizations, training in health care, nutrition, hygiene, especially through the recruitment of female extension staff. The provision of micro-finance to generate enhanced economic activities has increased local economic activities, albeit not always on a sustainable basis. Community and rural infrastructure (e.g. roads) have also improved access to markets.

Furthermore, it is important to emphasise that Sudan has a very complex and difficult context characterized by years of conflicts and wars.

Yet, the performance of the Sudan portfolio compares favorably with the average performance of projects implemented in countries classified in the same category as Sudan under the World Bank's *Policy and Institutional Assessment Index* (CPIA), a key element used by the Fund in the calculation of country performance. Only 31 per cent of projects implemented in this category of countries, usually have an overall satisfactory project achievement rating, compared to 50 per cent for the Sudan portfolio. If the classification of countries based on the *Rural Sector Performance Assessment Score* is considered (another IFAD element for calculating country performance), the performance of the Sudan portfolio also compares favorably to other comparable countries.

These programme achievements are quite remarkable considering approximately 30 per cent of the poor in IFAD's Near East and North Africa region live in Sudan, making this country a priority for IFAD, both at the global and regional level.

Moving forward, I believe that the IFAD achievements I have just outlined could be further enhanced in two ways. Firstly, on Policy Dialogue. IFAD has a long history of results at the policy level that have taken place within the project context. I would like to recall here measure to improve access to land and water resources, the development of community organizations and the promotion of gender equity – that take a special significance in this country. This is the way IFAD operates and the foundation of our policy dialogue with the government and other

partners. What is needed is, however, a strengthened capability of IFAD to expand and scale up the policy dialogue agenda beyond the project context, with the aim of pursuing changes at the national agricultural policy level.

It is important that the next IFAD / GOS results-based COSOP contains an explicit and clear policy dialogue agenda that is adequately resourced and followed up during implementation. In this regard, I want to underline the importance to IFAD of strengthening its country presence in a large country like Sudan. In fact the Sudan CPE and other recent CPEs by the Office of Evaluation have shown that a strong country presence, though not a panacea, can contribute to greater results on the ground and wider development effectiveness in general. The Evaluation notes that the absence of country presence prior to 2005 limited IFAD's Policy Dialogue impact, notably at the Federal level. This is now being addressed with the planned out posting of the Country Programme Manager and the strengthened Country Presence Officer in Khartoum under the new COSOP. This bodes well for enhanced policy dialogue to promote sound agriculture policy, considering both the Government of National Unity and the Government of South Sudan are investing in agriculture as their engine of rural poverty reduction.

The second area I wanted to cover is the need for a renewed focus on agriculture for rural poverty reduction in Sudan. Ladies and gentlemen, in Sudan, one out of two people live in poverty. As we said before, this is to say that about 30 percent of all the poor in the Near East and North

Africa region are in Sudan. Hence, the importance of this country for IFAD. It is very important to note that most of these poor are rural people, who depend on rainfed small holdings and livestock for their survival. These people are poor because of a number of reasons – low productivity of small holdings, limited access to markets, inputs, equipment and new technology. Small agriculture producers are also more vulnerable to exogenous factors, such as climate change and rising commodity prices.

But it would be wrong to just consider rainfed agriculture and small holders and pastoralists as a problem. In fact, rainfed agriculture is also an important provider of employment opportunities for small holder and landless workers. Plus, pastoralists and small holders account for much of the country's food production, particularly livestock products, with women playing a significant role. To sum up: they are a crucial asset for Sudan's rural economy and generate economic growth that builds peace and reduces poverty.

Unfortunately, in the past public investment focused on the irrigated sector, with significantly less investment in the rainfed crop and livestock sectors, on which most of the rural poor depend for their livelihood. This imbalance is now being addressed under the current strategy for agricultural development, the *Green Mobilization*, whose objectives include achieving food security and reducing poverty. Nevertheless, Government efforts to stimulate expansion of agriculture in the rainfed sector have yet to yield substantial change.

IFAD's overall contribution may appear modest relative to the total ODA. Yet, IFAD is still the largest donor in the agriculture sector, and a major partner too. But, IFAD could and should do more. In line with the Government of National Unity and the Government of South Sudan, the CPE recommends increased attention to agriculture and greater investment in the whole agricultural value chain -- from research to on-farm investments, rural infrastructure, rural financial services, agro-processing and the development of efficient, competitive markets for food at the national level.

The CPE observes that the potential of agriculture to contribute to economic growth and poverty reduction depends in particular on the productivity of small farmers and their access to inputs and markets. The future IFAD-Government strategy and activities in Sudan should therefore focus more than ever before on agricultural development and address the main challenges related to the low productivity of smallholder farmers. Security of land tenure, cultivator-managed irrigation, overgrazing and livestock health should continue to be addressed. However, consideration should be given to pursuing these in a more focused and systematic manner to ensure greater integration and the promotion of truly sustainable systems. Efforts should also be made towards promoting pro-poor agricultural innovations in a more forceful and systematic manner than in the past. Opportunities are there, such as in research as well as in the form of small farmers' initiatives. These must be supported, in particular, by TAGs that are more closely linked to IFAD

supported projects.

Mr. Chairman,

With that, let me proceed to conclude by saying now much I, and IFAD, deeply appreciate the collaboration and support shown by the Government of Sudan throughout the evaluation process. A special appreciation is due to the CCU for their outstanding collaboration and support for the organization of the workshop. Last but not least, I thank you all for coming hear and convey my best wishes to each of you for a successful outcome of the deliberations.