

Briefing note on IFAD's support to NEPAD in 2005

I. IFAD and its support to African development

Since its creation in 1977, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has been involved with funding agricultural and rural development in developing countries, particularly in Africa. From the initial onset, Africa has been a key priority for IFAD. By the end of 2004, African countries had received IFAD loans totalling approximately USD 3.72 billion, to finance 328 projects in 51 countries. In April 2005, out of 220 ongoing IFAD supported projects worldwide, 108 are carried out in Africa, representing almost 50% of IFAD's overall current financing. IFAD has also been providing grants to countries and institutions in the African region, supporting agricultural research, environmental impact assessment, training, rural poverty assessment studies and community development.

II. Context of IFAD's support to NEPAD

Regarding the institution's core business, IFAD has identified national and regional priority sectors within its ongoing lending programme - as for example rural infrastructure - and supports their promotion through highly concessionary loans and grants. About 50% of IFAD's lending programme is devoted to African countries. Furthermore, continuous efforts are being made to mobilise additional resources to support stakeholder dialogue/involvement as well as the Secretariat's activities in the formulation of regional programmes.

IFAD's most significant contribution to the NEPAD process is to enable major stakeholders advocating for the rural poor, particularly national and regional Farmer Organisations (FOs) as well as International Governmental Organisations (IGOs), to play a more proactive role in supporting the process. IFAD's support focuses at strengthening their capacity in agricultural policy formulation and enabling them to contribute grassroots input to the African consultative forums.

Regional consultations took place in 2003, and a continental synthesis workshop was held in Johannesburg in February 2004. Aside from the shared farmers' continental vision of African agriculture, a key outcome of the workshop was the FOs commitment to continue supporting the NEPAD agenda by further organising the provision of grassroots inputs to the regional, sub-regional and national levels. Representatives of the regional FOs recently visited the President of IFAD to express their appreciation for the process.

A Memorandum of Understanding between IFAD and NEPAD, to collaborate in organising stakeholder dialogue as well as participatory project design, was signed on 28 June 2004. To help the NEPAD Secretariat access and use the contributions from the African Civil Society, IFAD has prepared a Support Programme for partnership building and collaboration with civil society, including farmers' organisations, the private sector and other key stakeholders in participatory programme inception and design. More specifically, this programme consists in the provision of technical assistance in organising the participatory design of selected agricultural projects. In

addition, the concrete outputs in the form of projects and programmes will help expand the institutional framework for the implementation of NEPAD-sanctioned projects and programmes (see below).

These activities are backed by thematic studies, for example on innovative approaches for agricultural water use, on competitiveness of agricultural products and access to markets, on rural finance, as well as on empowerment of the rural poor through community-based participatory approaches or farmer field schools.

IFAD continued to collaborate closely with the other core partners in the NEPAD-led CAADP Support Group (FAO, WFP, AfDB, WB, UNECA, UNIDO, etc.), particularly benefiting from the well-established traditional working relationship with the other two Rome-based agencies, which are meeting regularly to share information and coordinate their activities together.

III. Support extended to NEPAD in 2005

During 2005 IFAD continued to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), in particular working to ensure that farmers' organizations are fully involved in implementation planning for the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

IFAD supported consultations among national and sub-regional farmers' organizations to enable them to agree on a common vision for African agricultural development. Based on these consultations, delegates were prepared to represent the grassroots position at a series of CAADP regional implementation planning meetings held by NEPAD.

In May 2005, IFAD took part in the G8/NEPAD Summit on the Implementation of the CAADP held in Accra, Ghana. The summit brought together government representatives, private sector leaders, G8 members, heads of bilateral and multilateral development organizations, regional economic communities, and civil society and farmers' organizations, whose contributions were among the highlights of the meeting.

At the summit, IFAD's Vice President stressed that the organization would continue its work to support the CAADP implementation process, enabling farmers' and professional organizations to play an active part, and strengthening the capacities of regional economic communities.

IV. Outlook

IFAD is committed to provide continued support to NEPAD's stakeholders' capacity strengthening. By doing this, special attention will be given to regional NEPAD initiatives aiming at up-scaling innovations, such as New Rice for Africa (NERICA), the dissemination of processing technologies and the development of regional markets for cassava, improved approaches for agricultural water use and the promotion of rural finance at regional and continental levels.