



A partnership for inclusive rural development

Japan and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)



Japan and IFAD: Enhancing human security through partnership

A food crisis sparks global action

The origins of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) stretch back to the food crisis of the early 1970s, which sparked the World Food Conference of 1974. Three years later, with support from donors, including Japan, IFAD was created as both a specialized agency of the United Nations and an international financial institution.

Since 1978, IFAD has empowered about 453 million people to grow more food, manage their land and other natural resources more productively, learn new skills, start businesses, build strong organizations and gain a voice in the decisions that affect their lives.

Today, however, some 795 million women, children and men are still chronically undernourished, and 160 million children are stunted because of early malnutrition. With the global population expected to exceed 9 billion by 2050, agricultural production will need to increase by 60 per cent to meet anticipated demand. IFAD's work has become more important than ever, and depends on close cooperation with innovative development partners such as Japan to achieve results.

As a founding member of IFAD, Japan has served on the Executive Board since IFAD's inception. Most recently, it played a strong role in the Consultation on the Tenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD10), where it pledged US\$57 million.

Japan's cumulative contributions to IFAD's replenishment resources amount to about US\$504 million, ranking the country the sixth largest donor to IFAD among 176 Member States. Along with that of other donors, Japan's generosity will enable IFAD to help lift millions of rural people out of poverty across the world.

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A greater focus on human security

Both Japan and IFAD understand that rural development goes beyond economics to embrace the wider context of human security. The same conditions that hamper rural transformation also provide fertile ground for unrest and conflict. These conditions include poor governance; lack of basic infrastructure; limited access to education, health care and financial services; intense competition for natural resources; and scarcity of opportunities for young people.

In keeping with their shared commitment to strengthening human security, IFAD and Japan agree that women and men deserve to live in a world without poverty, where children are well nourished and well educated, the benefits from economic growth and prosperity are equitably shared, and the voices of all peoples are respected.

IFAD's rural transformation agenda is based on supporting rural communities as a powerful engine for sustainable and people-centred development and peaceful and dynamic societies. Taking an inclusive approach to rural development – which addresses inequities between men and women and between rural and urban areas – lays the foundations for sustainable agricultural systems that provide access to safe and nutritious food for all. Rural transformation can be the catalyst for overall economic growth and poverty reduction, a healthy environment, greater gender equality, and more resilient smallholder farmers.

Promoting human security

“At IFAD we know that reducing poverty and strengthening food and nutrition security is not just about raising incomes and increasing production. Human well-being has social as well as economic dimensions. We invest in rural communities because we believe that development must be people-centred if it is to be sustainable. It must empower women and men, young people and older generations, and all those who are marginalized because of race or ethnicity.”

– Kanayo F. Nwanze,
IFAD President, 2015

“... A human being, irrespective of where he or she is born, is entitled to live a healthy, dignified, fulfilling life, and should be allowed to develop his or her ability to the maximum extent possible.”

– Ambassador Yukio Takasu,
Japan's Permanent
Representative to the
United Nations, 2008





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TICAD: A shared vision of development in Africa

Both Japan and IFAD have made a special commitment to the poorest regions of the world, including sub-Saharan Africa.

In 1993, Japan convened the first Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) to refocus the world's attention on the urgent needs of the African continent. TICAD enables African leaders and partners to engage in high-level dialogue that stresses the importance of African ownership of Africa's development. To date, five conferences have been held, most recently in Yokohama, Japan, in 2013 (TICAD V).

The Yokohama Action Plan 2013-2017, an outcome of TICAD V, focuses on core development challenges, including enhancing smallholder agriculture. IFAD is a natural partner in implementing the plan by improving access to finance and markets for smallholders, increasing productivity and connecting farmers and the private sector. Through these actions, IFAD helps to build win-win relationships that benefit all parties.

IFAD President Nwanze played an active role in TICAD V. "TICAD has helped in much more than just the area of technology and transfer and business development," Nwanze said. "It has played a large role in raising the consciousness of emerging leadership on the African continent."

TICAD VI will be hosted by Kenya in 2016 and IFAD welcomes this move for the first TICAD Summit to be held in Africa. The Fund will continue to support the next chapter of TICAD's important work, as it has done for more than 20 years.

Working together towards inclusive development

Achieving inclusive development requires a new way of thinking about rural areas. Farming, on any scale, must be recognized as a business. Acknowledging smallholders as entrepreneurs, and enabling them to access better resources, incentives and markets, empowers them to transform their communities. Japan and IFAD are working with partners on key issues such as productivity, gender equality and value chains.

A leading development partner: JICA

In October 2010, IFAD signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) – a leading bilateral development partner. The memorandum provides the two agencies with a strategic framework for cofinancing, capacity-building, policy dialogue and knowledge management, particularly around the Coalition for African Rice Development (CARD) initiative. JICA and IFAD work together to enhance development results at both the national and international levels. For example, the two organizations are collaborating on strengthening the rice-milling sector in Nigeria, with an IFAD-funded programme to support improved post-harvest technologies that have been introduced by a project funded by JICA.

Working to double rice production in Africa by 2018

As part of a South-South cooperation project, IFAD and its partners enabled experts in rice mechanization, agronomists and equipment manufacturers from 18 African countries to take part in study exchanges to Brazil and Thailand in 2014.

The groups learned about mechanization through visits to rice processors and exporters, research centres, seed companies and agricultural equipment manufacturers. During these exchange visits, partnerships were initiated with 16 organizations in Brazil and 13 in Thailand.

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Before the household methodologies, I did not understand well the concepts of gender issues. The [household methodologies] tool helped me to judge myself regarding the workload my wife bore. I didn't prepare firewood, I didn't wash clothes, and I didn't wash my children. These activities were "women's work", and it was embarrassing for me [to do them]. Knowledge has liberated me from these ties to tradition. I now help my wife in all activities, and she too helps me in what I am doing in the backyard. Not only do I share the workload of my wife, but we both decide on family matters.

Fasiko Wogosso, farmer participant in the Transformative Household Methodology project in Ethiopia

The project established an online platform to enable experts and organizations to connect across continents in a community of practice. Partners focus on agricultural mechanization to promote enhanced rice production, processing, storage and marketing innovations. As a result, they improve both the quantity and the quality of rice produced. To date, the community of practice has more than 250 members and involves more than 150 agricultural research and development stakeholders from 18 countries.

The project was an initiative of CARD, a multistakeholder coalition launched by JICA, the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) at TICAD IV in 2008. CARD's goal is to achieve sustainable food security and poverty reduction through increased and better-coordinated investment and assistance in the rice sector. Ultimately, it aims to double rice production in Africa from 14 million tons in 2008 to 28 million tons by 2018.

IFAD serves on CARD's steering committee, providing both technical and financial support. This support complements the efforts of other partners, including JICA. IFAD has also played a key role in integrating the JICA-supported National Rice Development Strategy into national development and poverty reduction strategies, thereby highlighting the importance of the rice sector in a broader development context.

Taking steps towards gender equality

Together with partners, and with strong support from Japan and other donors, IFAD has developed the household methodologies – a package of innovative approaches that empower women from within their homes. The methodologies enable families to transform their ways of thinking, interacting and operating. As a result, resources, benefits and workloads are shared more equitably, the overall well-being of the household and its members is strengthened, and incomes rise.

The Transformative Household Methodology project in Ethiopia, which was completed in 2014, was one of several projects funded by Japan to use the new approach. It trained family members to analyse the dynamics, responsibilities and expectations in their households, to reflect on their assumptions about the roles of women and men, and then to take action to make changes and plan for the future. This is particularly significant because efforts to support women's empowerment often focus on strengthening women's economic opportunities and decision-making capacities outside the home, in groups or organizations. However, the women involved often remain disempowered at the household level – the basic unit of society.

The project was managed by Send a Cow, Ethiopia, and initially trained more than 80 households. Women and men who took part became role models and passed on their newly acquired knowledge and skills. Overall, the project reached 320 families.

When farmer Fasiko Wogosso came to train others, he said he faced some resistance at first “because of the deep-rooted division of labour between men and women in our culture. However, I have visited these farmers on several occasions, and now they are altering their attitudes.”

Household methodologies help people to understand that gender inequality is often part of the reason that they stay poor. Working and planning together for the future is part of a solution that benefits everyone.

Since 1995, Japan has contributed more than US\$5.8 million to IFAD for gender equality initiatives around the world. These have ranged from supporting women as agents of change in the Himalayas, to developing income-generating activities for women in Gaza and the West Bank, and mitigating the effects of HIV/AIDS on poor rural women in Latin America and the Caribbean. Japan’s contributions have also funded important work on scaling up household methodologies in IFAD-supported programmes and projects.

Strengthening value chains and public-private-producer partnerships

Japan and IFAD both believe that the private sector has a role in pro-poor development. Through Japan’s Global Food Value Chain Strategy and IFAD’s role in facilitating links between farmers and the private sector to foster inclusive market-based relationships, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan (MAFF) and IFAD are accelerating efforts to enhance innovative and sustainable approaches to rural development.

As part of these efforts, the Ministry and IFAD organized a business seminar in August 2014 in Tokyo. IFAD’s President presented the Fund’s role in public-private-producer partnerships (4Ps) to representatives of Japan’s private sector. In 2015, IFAD received the first member of staff seconded from the Ministry to strengthen collaboration in promoting 4Ps. This exchange of personnel comes at a time when IFAD is exploring partnership with companies based in Japan that are committed to achieving sustainable rural development.

In the past, IFAD has supported grant projects that enhanced business partnerships between the Japanese private sector and farmers in Sierra Leone and Liberia. IFAD looks forward to helping to forge other equitable and sustainable partnerships that benefit all parties.

Certification boosts the cocoa industry

The IFAD-funded project Strengthening Smallholders’ Access to Markets for Certified Sustainable Products (SAMCERT) has generated good results for cocoa producers by strengthening value chains through certification.

Through SAMCERT, members of three Sierra Leone producers’ cooperatives were trained in fairtrade practices and received certification in 2012. This led to an existing Japanese commercial partner – wholesale confectionery supplier Tachibana & Co. Ltd – increasing the volume of cocoa it purchased from the certified cooperatives. Farm-gate prices for cooperative members increased significantly as a result of certification and the improved quality and larger quantity of the cooperatives’ produce.

Although they gained certification in July 2014, Liberian cocoa cooperatives were not able to sell their produce as fairtrade because of the Ebola crisis. Tachibana & Co. Ltd stepped in to buy 75 tons of conventional cocoa. The company’s decision demonstrated its commitment to helping farmers earn much-needed income in the face of this major public health challenge.

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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 US\$17 billion in grants and low-interest loans to projects that have reached about 453 million people. IFAD is an international financial institution and a specialized United Nations agency based in Rome – the UN’s food and agriculture hub.



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