



IFAD, the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development

Working together to enable smallholders to influence rural development policies in Africa

IFAD has been working closely with the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) since they were established in July 2001, seeking new ways to combat rural poverty across the continent. African leaders created NEPAD to promote sustainable development and strengthen efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the international community's time-bound targets to meet the needs of the world's poorest people. Within the framework of NEPAD, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) was prepared in June 2002.

Seventy per cent of Africa's poor people live in rural areas and depend predominantly on agriculture for their livelihoods. The CAADP aims to cut hunger and poverty, generate economic growth through agriculture, reduce the burden of food imports and open the way for an expansion of agricultural exports. Boosting smallholder farmer production and ensuring food security are also at the top of the AU's agenda. IFAD shares the AU's and NEPAD's vision for agricultural and rural development in Africa and has been closely involved in groundwork to implement the CAADP from 2002 to the present day.

In 2003, at the Summit of the Heads of State of the African Union in Maputo, Mozambique, governments pledged to put agriculture back on the development agenda. They committed to allocate at least 10 per cent of national budgetary resources to agriculture and rural development. This commitment is being fulfilled through decisions and recommendations made by African leaders at the first AU African Conference of Ministers of Agriculture, held in Bamako, Mali, in January 2006.

This commitment to agriculture and rural development has intensified IFAD's cooperation with the AU and NEPAD.

Enabling poor rural people to shape their future

IFAD and NEPAD share a common commitment: to enable poor rural people to play a part in their own development. This is in line with the first objective of IFAD's Strategic Framework, to strengthen the capacity of poor rural people and their organizations.

IFAD's most significant ongoing contribution to the NEPAD process, and to preparations for implementing the CAADP, is to enable poor rural people and their organizations to voice their needs and participate in policy dialogue that affects their well-being and their future. In June 2004, IFAD and NEPAD signed a memorandum of understanding setting out their intention to work together towards this end. The memorandum sets out collaborative approaches for strengthening rural civil society groups, promoting participatory consultations and incorporating the opinions of rural people into NEPAD's agricultural strategy.

Implementing the CAADP and working with farmers' organizations

IFAD cooperates with farmers' organizations in Africa within the context of the CAADP and its own mandate. Farmers' organizations have largely endorsed the CAADP, but they are seeking to make it more responsive to the interests and needs of poor rural people. IFAD supports them in this and is working to strengthen its alliances with farmers' organizations to foster the evolution of a bottom-up approach to the CAADP.

For example, IFAD has been working closely for several years with the Réseau des organisations paysannes et de producteurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (ROPPA). This is a network of farmers' groups in West Africa. IFAD supports ROPPA with grants and technical assistance to build its capacity to amplify the voices of poor rural people. ROPPA has been one of the leading forces in building consensus among farmers' groups throughout Africa in response to the CAADP.

In July 2003, IFAD assisted ROPPA and its counterparts in central, eastern and southern Africa to hold three regional consultations on NEPAD's policy programme. The farmers' organizations presented their contributions at a synthesis workshop held in Pretoria, South Africa in February 2004. This collaboration led to the establishment of an ad hoc committee of producers' organizations of sub-Saharan Africa.

IFAD has supported regional farmers' organizations to update and publish the position paper that emerged from the consultations held in 2003 and 2004.



In May 2005, IFAD took part in the G8/NEPAD Summit on the Implementation of the CAADP held in Accra, Ghana. The meeting was attended by farmers' organizations, government representatives, private sector leaders, G8 members, heads of bilateral and multilateral development organizations, regional economic communities and civil society groups.

At the summit, IFAD stressed that it would continue to support the CAADP implementation process. To backstop NEPAD in implementing the summit's recommendations, IFAD also took part in the CAADP Retreat in Pretoria, South Africa in October 2005.

Supporting a joint NEPAD/AU Action Plan on CAADP and the AU Sirte Declaration

In February 2006, IFAD took part in the First AU Conference of African Ministers of Agriculture in Bamako, Mali. Among the key issues discussed was a joint NEPAD/AU Action Plan on CAADP and the AU Sirte Declaration, to spearhead an overall African agricultural and rural development agenda with emphasis on country-level activities.

A single action plan, combining NEPAD's CAADP and the AU's Sirte Declaration, is a strong indication that African leaders are committing themselves to reviving the continent's agricultural sector in order to foster socio-economic development and bring African countries closer to achieving the MDGs.

To meet the challenge of poverty reduction, IFAD believes that development assistance must be increased, and that global and national policies must become more sensitive to the interests of poor rural people. No single institution or organization can satisfy the need for new solutions; contributions must also come from smallholders and marginal farmers, women, marginalized groups, governments, the private sector, civil society and international development partners working together within a common framework.

IFAD is providing three grants to the AU to help bridge NEPAD and the Union's work in rural development in Africa. The grants are to support the implementation of major policy and strategic initiatives, and to build a framework to secure land rights, enhance productivity, secure acceptable livelihoods and tackle animal diseases.

In June 2006, IFAD, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the International Fertilizer Development Centre supported the organization of the NEPAD Summit of Heads of State on Fertilizers in Abuja, Nigeria. IFAD also supported the participation of African farmers' organizations to the AU/NEPAD Heads of State and Government Summit on Food Security, held in Abuja in December 2006.

Farmers' Forum

IFAD continues to support capacity building for NEPAD's stakeholders at the local, national and regional levels. Cooperation and partnership with farmers' organizations are being fully integrated in IFAD's operations.

Building on its work with farmers' organizations in Africa and beyond, IFAD established the Farmers' Forum in 2006. This is a global process of consultation on rural development and poverty reduction that starts at the grass roots.

The Farmers' Forum held its first two-day session in February 2006. More than 50 leaders of farmers' organizations, representing millions of smallholders and rural producers from around the world, attended the meeting, which was a major innovation. The second Farmers' Forum, held ahead of IFAD's Governing Council meeting in February 2008, brought together about 80 farmers' leaders from around the world to share positions on access to natural resources, climate change, policymaking and policy influence.

The African Union report on food security

The AU report on the Status of Food Security and Prospects for Agricultural Development in Africa was prepared in collaboration with IFAD, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) and published in July 2005. The report showed the unchallenged prominence of the agricultural sector in the economies of most African countries. For the continent as a whole, the agriculture sector accounts for approximately 60 per cent of total employment, 20 per cent of total exports and 15 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). Accelerating agricultural growth in Africa is therefore crucial to achieving food security and reducing hunger, and for generating employment and trade.

IFAD and NEPAD working together in the field

IFAD plays a key role in specific NEPAD initiatives aimed at scaling up innovations in agriculture. These include disseminating new cassava-processing technologies and developing regional markets for the crop, and promoting New Rice for Africa (NERICA) varieties.

Cassava: the world's third most important crop

Cassava is an essential source of food and income throughout the tropics. About 600 million people in Africa, Asia and Latin America depend on the plant for their survival, deriving calories and income from the roots and leaves. Cassava production in Africa has more than tripled since 1961 – from 33 million metric tonnes per year to 101 metric tonnes – making the continent the largest producer. In countries like Ghana and Nigeria, wide adoption of high-yielding varieties and improved pest management have been largely responsible for the sharp rise in production. Following IFAD-supported initiatives in the country, Nigeria is the world's top producer of cassava.



IFAD has played a major role in boosting cassava production and continues to work with African countries to enable smallholders to increase their yields and their incomes. IFAD also supports the development of efficient markets for cassava that benefit producers and processors.

IFAD currently has loans of more than US\$77 million to five programmes and projects working on cassava, directly benefiting more than 1.5 million households. IFAD's efforts support NEPAD's Pan African Cassava Initiative (PACI).

IFAD's Cassava Processing and Marketing Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa promotes innovative cassava processing technologies and marketing opportunities, combined with knowledge management and capacity strengthening. The programme is working to increase the income of stakeholders throughout the commodity chain. A start-up workshop was held in March 2006 in Accra, Ghana.

Using a contribution from the Government of Italy, IFAD has set up a three-year support programme to catalyse the impact of its investment portfolio on cassava production in Africa. The programme aims to increase the impact of IFAD's work on rural livelihoods, at the same time as creating opportunities for scaling up innovations and good practices through information sharing and knowledge management in the context of NEPAD. Increased private sector investment is one of the key expected outcomes. This will be fostered through initial subsidies to reduce risks and transaction costs.

New rice for Africa

IFAD and NEPAD share a commitment to poverty reduction and improved nutrition in Africa through increased rice production. Consumption of rice is growing throughout sub-Saharan Africa. But demand is growing faster than supply, especially in West Africa, where annual imports cost at least US\$750 million. IFAD has given three grants to the West Africa Rice Development Association (WARDA), an intergovernmental research association of 17 West African states, to support efforts to boost rice production, in particular new varieties known as New Rice for Africa (NERICA).

Through these grants, IFAD has established close links with WARDA's African Rice Initiative, which is promoting the dissemination of NERICA varieties that combine the high-yield characteristics of Asian rice with the resistance of indigenous African strains. The African Rice Initiative is a cornerstone of NEPAD's agricultural plan.

About 30,000 farmers in 20 countries in sub-Saharan Africa are using NERICA varieties, many of them women who spend numerous hours planting, weeding and harvesting rice. NERICA varieties have higher yields, thus reducing drudgery and increasing incomes, and they are also higher in protein, thus improving family nutrition.

The challenge now for WARDA, IFAD and other partners is to scale up the use of NERICA varieties even further, especially in eastern and southern Africa. This will also require improvements in seed production and distribution.

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IFAD in Africa

- Since IFAD was established 30 years ago, African countries have received US\$4.4 billion to finance 372 programmes and projects in 51 countries.
- Nearly 50 per cent of IFAD's programmes and projects have been devoted to African countries since the organization started work.
- In the current portfolio as of the end of April 2008, 122 of the total 242 programmes and projects are in Africa.
- IFAD's current financing for Africa is worth US\$1.8 billion, out of a total current portfolio of US\$4 billion.
- Nearly 178 million women, men and children have been reached by IFAD's operations in Africa.
- In 2004, IFAD started work on the Field Presence Pilot Programme to increase its engagement in programme and pilot implementation, promote policy dialogue and partnerships, and improve knowledge management. Out of IFAD's 15 pilot field presence initiatives worldwide, 10 are in Africa.



Building a poverty-free world

In 2008, IFAD marks 30 years of fighting rural poverty and hunger. IFAD was created in response to the droughts and famines that killed many millions of people in Africa and Asia in the early 1970s. World leaders at the 1974 World Food Conference decided to form a global alliance to fight rural poverty, an underlying cause of hunger and malnutrition. Their vision was a new and unique partnership between the members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and other developing countries dedicated to agriculture and rural development.

IFAD is an international financial institution and a specialized United Nations agency. Since 1978, IFAD's member countries have together invested more than US\$10 billion in loans and grants, helping over 300 million poor rural women and men to grow more food, improve their land, learn new skills, start businesses, build strong organizations and communities, and gain a voice in the decisions that affect their lives. But hunger and poverty remain widespread in many countries, and poor rural people face new and daunting challenges, such as climate change. Now on the 30th anniversary of IFAD's founding, we honour our founders' vision and renew our commitment to enabling poor rural people to overcome poverty.



Enabling poor rural people
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