

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

**NATIONAL ROUNDTABLE WORKSHOP
INDIA COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION**

7-8 December 2009

1. Mr Ashok Chawla, Finance Secretary of India;
2. Mr. G.B Mukerji, Secretary of Tribal Affairs;
3. Prof. M.S. Swaminathan, Chairman of the Swaminathan Foundation;
4. Authorities and Officials of the Central and State Government of India and other Development Agencies; and
5. Members of the IFAD Evaluation Committee

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 India and IFAD.

Let me start by saying that the focus of this workshop is very much on learning. It is based on the main issues that have emerged from the recently-completed India Country Programme Evaluation (CPE), and it has the overall aim of improving the effectiveness of the future cooperation between the Government of India and IFAD.

Allow me to say a few words on the expected outcome of this workshop. Today and tomorrow we will be discussing the findings of the CPE. In

particular, we will devote time to in-depth discussion of four forward looking themes, which are: (1) The value of the Government of India-IFAD partnership in supporting smallholder agriculture; (2) Priorities for knowledge sharing and promotion of innovations; (3) Social empowerment and institutional architecture; and (4) Economic empowerment.

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

I would like to acknowledge the presence of the distinguished members of the Evaluation Committee of IFAD's Executive Board. They are here to participate in the final stage of the CPE, namely this national roundtable workshop. Their aim is gain reassurance that CPE's findings and recommendations are useful for the Government and IFAD and are duly considered in the development of the future IFAD – Government cooperation. The Committee members also want to gain further familiarity with IFAD-funded operations on the ground through a field visit that they will undertake later this week in Maharashtra. I would like to take this opportunity to briefly introduce the members. They are: Mr Abdel Aziz Hosni from Egypt who is the Chairperson of the Committee, Mr Benvindo Belluco (Brazil), Mr Kent Vachon (Canada), Mr Sobhan

Pattanayak (India), Mr Purnomo Ahmad Chandra (Indonesia), Mr Garvan McCann representing the member from Ireland, Ms Agnes van Ardenne-van der Hoeven (Netherlands), Mr Yaya Olaniran (Nigeria), and Ms Amalia Garcia Tharn (Sweden).

This is the first CPE in India done by IFAD's independent Office of Evaluation. The evaluation builds on three main pillars, which include: (i) an assessment of the performance of the project portfolio in India; (ii) a review of the non-lending activities, namely achievements in policy dialogue, knowledge management and partnership building; (iii) an evaluation of the country strategy in terms of its relevance and effectiveness. These three pillars allow the CPE to generate an assessment of the overall achievement of the Government of India and IFAD partnership.

I would now like to turn to some of the main findings from the India CPE.

The evaluation indicates that the overall achievement of the Government of India and IFAD partnership is satisfactory. This is a commendable result, as the India CPE is the first CPE that reveals such a positive overall appreciation of the partnership between the Fund and a borrowing member state. This is therefore an achievement that we should collectively be proud of.

The positive results include, in particular the: (i) empowerment of women and improvements in their incomes and overall livelihoods; (ii) support to tribal development, for example, in terms of promotion of

rural infrastructure such as roads and small-small scale irrigation, health and education interventions, and tribal land rights; and (iii) development of rural finance systems, including linking the rural poor with commercial banks.

And fourth, I would add that the approach and content of the IFAD supported projects have lent themselves to rapid and sound replication and upscaling, especially by the Government and other development organizations. For example, this is evidenced by the attention allocated to promoting women's self help groups, as a key instrument for rural poverty reduction in many of the programmes and projects funded by the Government itself.

At this stage, I would now like to go deeper in one of the major areas of focus of IFAD-supported projects in India, which is tribal development. IFAD has assisted seven projects that have focused on tribal development in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Manipur, Meghalaya, and Orissa for a total IFAD loan amount of around USD 165 million. The total costs of these seven projects when considering both Government counterpart funding and cofinancing is around USD 330 million.

The first tribal development project was approved by the Fund's Board in 1987, more than 20 years ago. In fact, IFAD is the only multi-lateral development organization that has devoted a significant proportion of its support towards the more than 80 million tribal people who live in India. IFAD's engagement in this area has – overtime - allowed it to develop, experience and specialize in supporting the tribal

people in India. However, it is also evident from the latest economic and social indicators, the agenda remains incomplete and much more still remains to be done to ensure that tribal communities can achieve sustainable food security and have better incomes, while still maintaining their cultural heritage and traditional ways of living.

Moreover, many of the areas in which tribal development projects have been implemented are affected by conflict. This is, among other issues, due to the exploitation of tribal people by money lenders, the displacement from their natural habitats, by e.g., by mining companies and limited access to land, water, forests and other natural resources, which are central to the livelihoods of tribal populations. In many places, these conflicts have escalated into more wide spread and persistent insurgencies, which are affecting law and order as well as overall service delivery by the Government and transforming the affected areas into sort of fragile zones. This is causing serious distress to development in tribal areas and ultimately the welfare of tribal populations.

Experience shows that there is a causal link between enduring poverty and the prevalence of violent conflicts in developing countries: first the human and economic cost of conflict is tremendous. Second its impact on the political, social and economic development of the affected region as well as its surrounding regions is profound. Hence the need to both ensure that violent conflict is effectively prevented and promptly addressed to ensure results on rural poverty.

India is not alone in having to deal with issues of internal conflict in tribal areas. Evaluation experience accumulated by IFAD's independent Office of Evaluation reveals that similar situations and challenges exist in other countries covered by IFAD-supported operations, such as Guatemala, Mexico, Nepal, Pakistan, and others.

The CPE is right in recommending that the future IFAD-Government partnership in India should retain a focus on tribal development with added emphasis in addressing the main challenges related to conflict. There is a need to ensure that a common awareness of conflict-related issues is integrated into all future tribal development projects. Socio-economic and security discussions must be tackled simultaneously in order to create the conditions required to escape from a downward spiral wherein insecurity and under-development are mutually reinforcing. This would require both the Government of India and IFAD to mainstream conflict-prevention as well as peace building and security considerations in future projects aimed at supporting tribal people. Furthermore, project design, implementation as well as supervision missions should benefit from including experts on conflict resolution and peace building. In addition, as another measure, IFAD could make systematic efforts to document and share with the Government of India its experiences in promoting successful innovative approaches to tribal development in conflict situation in other countries.

It is also however essential to underline that the evaluation recommended support to tribal development in India needs to be encompass other

priority areas highlighted by the CPE, such as supporting smallholder farmers in rainfed areas to improve their productivity and access to markets, gender mainstreaming, as well as promoting deeper integration of all major actors involved in agriculture and rural development at the local level including government authorities, civil society, NGOs, parliamentarians and the private sector. Moreover, IFAD-supported operations at the district and block levels will also need to ensure more comprehensive synergies with the various centrally sponsored schemes of the Government of India, to ensure complementarities and co-ordination of service delivery and development assistance.

With that, let me proceed to conclude by saying how much I, and IFAD, deeply appreciate the collaboration and support shown by the Government of India throughout the evaluation process, and in particular for the generous and warm hospitality of the Government, and for all the wonderful arrangements which have been made for the national roundtable workshop and our field visit to Maharashtra later this week. A special appreciation is due to the Department of Economic Affairs in the Ministry of Finance for their contributions and outstanding collaboration and support for the organisation of this workshop. Last but not least, I thank you all for coming here and convey my best wishes to each of you for a successful outcome of the deliberations.