

**Opening Speech on the IFAD's India Country Programme  
Evaluation Workshop by Ms Loretta M Vas, Additional Secretary,  
Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government  
of India**

**Venue:** Hotel Taj Mahal, Mansingh Road, New Delhi  
**Date:** 7<sup>th</sup> December 2009  
**Time:** 10.00 A.M.

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Dear

Dr. Abdel Aziz Mohamed Hosni, Chairperson of the Evaluation Committee,  
Agriculture Counsellor, Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt;  
Esteemed members of Evaluation Committee and Country Programme Evaluation  
Team;

Mr. Kevin Cleaver, Assistant President, IFAD;

Mr. Luciano Lavizzari, Director, Office of Evaluation;

Mr. Thomas Elhaut, Director, Asia and Pacific Division;

My colleagues from various Ministries and State Governments

I have great pleasure in welcoming all of you for this workshop jointly being hosted by the Government of India and the International Fund for Agricultural Development to discuss the findings of the Country Programme Evaluation Mission.

IFAD was established as a specialized agency of the United Nations in 1977 as an outcome of the World Bank Food Conference held in 1974. IFAD was founded on the basis of the realization that the causes of food insecurity and famine were not so much related to failures in food production, but to structural problems related to poverty.

IFAD's cherished mission to '**enable poor rural people to overcome poverty**' is still relevant to India and many countries of the World. We cherish the major strategic thrusts of IFAD projects which are for capacity-building; access of marginalized groups to resources; and diversification of livelihood opportunities. IFAD projects largely focus on micro-finance and woman's empowerment which have been shown to be the most effective means of achieving project objectives.

India's relationship with IFAD is unique since India is not only the largest borrower of IFAD's funds, but also the largest developing country contributor. India and IFAD have common objectives – poverty alleviation with a focus on the rural poor and the empowerment of women through capacity building. Sharing a three decade long journey, India looks to IFAD for continued support and assistance in the key focus areas of rural development, tribal development, women's empowerment, and micro-finance. We appreciate that the IFAD is the only international development organization dedicated exclusively to agriculture, food security and rural poverty reduction in developing countries. The support of its members has enabled IFAD to consistently expand its investment in agricultural and rural development.

IFAD has undertaken a Country Programme Evaluation of their ongoing and closed projects in India. **It is the first India CPE since the beginning of IFAD operations in 1978.** I appreciate the objective of CPE which is to assess the performance and impact of IFAD operations; and to gauge sustainability of IFAD's interventions in various parts of the country. I understand that it has generated a series of findings and recommendations that will serve as building blocks for the formulation of the forthcoming Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP) by IFAD.

So far **IFAD has financed 23 programmes/projects in India, approving loans for a total of US\$ 636.4 million (approx.).** Out of these, 15 projects have already been closed. **Presently, eight projects with a total assistance of US\$ 254.35 million are under implementation.** IFAD is playing an important role in niche areas related to the grass root level like rural livelihoods, women empowerment and tribal development and has been bringing best international practices into India. IFAD's pilot programmes in India have brought in several successful practices which have been adopted by the National and State Governments as well as other donors on a wide scale.

I would specially mention the 'North Eastern Region Community Resources Management Project (NERCORMP)', which ended on 31st March, 2008. The project was implemented in two districts each of Assam, Meghalaya and Manipur. The impact has been so visible that the Government of India has decided to upscale the project for the entire North Eastern Region. The proposed World Bank assisted 'North Eastern Region Livelihoods Project' would build on the strength of the IFAD aided NERCORM Project which includes community based group formation for livelihood generation and natural resource management.

The evaluation report of IFAD assisted projects will be an invaluable aid in helping us design our future projects in a manner that the fruits borne by of their successful implementation are long lasting and sustainable. Normally the projects do well during their implementation phase but thereafter the benefits of the projects get diluted and over a period may even be washed out completely. We were eagerly awaiting the report of CPE Mission and it is indeed heartening to know that the overall portfolio performance of our country rated as 5 points or 85% has been ranked highest till date in IFAD's history. It is above the rating of 74% for all projects as indicated in IFAD's Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD's Operations 2008. Our endeavor would be to further improve our performance in partnership with IFAD. I believe that the next one and half day deliberations would enlighten us on our strengths and weaknesses as planners and implementers of projects in difficult areas and finally aid us in coming up with a more robust framework for the next Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP). I also hope that the Evaluation Committee's to Maharashtra's Tejawini Project after this workshop would also be a happy and enlightening experience. I wish all of you have pleasant and fruitful sessions of intense discussions and deliberations.

Thank you very much.