

Morocco Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation (CSPE) Final National workshop (Virtual)

03 February 2021.
9h45-12h00.

DRAFT TALKING POINTS FOR THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR / NEN

Excellency, Mr Mohamed Sadiki, Secretary General of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Rural development, Water and Forests;

Mr. Donal Brown, AVP PMD;

Mr. Nicolas Martin, Head of UN RC Office in Morocco;

Mr. Fabrizio Felloni, Interim OIC of IOE;

Distinguished and honorable participants;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It's a pleasure for me to be with you today for this final workshop on the Morocco Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation (CSPE).

The speakers before me acknowledged already the long standing and fruitful collaboration between IFAD and the Government of Morocco. I join my voice to underline the strategic importance of our partnership, which will be more important than ever in view of the increasing global and regional development challenges.

As you know, today's event constitutes the final step in the portfolio evaluation process, which took place during a challenging year. Allow me here to congratulate IOE for leading this process. I also thank the government of Morocco and IFAD for the exemplary collaboration and the excellent outcome that we are discussing today.

The CSPE covered ten investment projects over a 12 years period from 2008 to 2020 covering 5 out of the 12 Regions of the Kingdom of Morocco. The evaluation sample is significant and its main outcomes demonstrate the overall coherence and relevance of IFAD-financed operations to the context and to the needs of the rural population of the country.

We note with satisfaction that remarkable results have been achieved in terms of human and social capital development, targeting and empowering of rural women and youth. Important results relate also to the infrastructure development through the implementation of more than 530 Km of irrigation networks and management of 14500 ha of plantations and crops and to the improvement of production techniques and yields.

Gender equality and women's empowerment have always been at the core of IFAD's efforts to reduce poverty. Here, we would like to highlight the fact that IFAD works in very marginal and isolated areas where the cultural context is very traditional and does not often enable strong participation of women in economic activities and in decision-making.

Women have little, if any, access to land, to productive assets and finance. IFAD projects came long way through and made significant and continuous efforts and investments to

reach these results. In our view, the IFAD portfolio made a breakthrough by reaching 29 % in this difficult context and has evidence through its wealth of success stories and effective engagement with women and youth across the portfolio (many examples of women cooperatives and other women-led activities offer evidence).

We also encouraged young women to participate actively in decision-making, to engage in wider forums such as the regional consultative meetings toward the establishment of an IFAD Youth Advisory Council, and to contribute to the IFAD Rural Youth Action Plan.

The CSPE recognises also the good results in terms of sustainable natural resources management, climate change adaptation, income generating activities and value chain development.

On the policy front, I would like to confirm IFAD's commitment to work alongside the government to identify entry points for promoting enabling rural policies. Our priority areas for policy engagement would be around rural youth employment, women empowerment and south-south and triangular cooperation. IFAD's engagement on policy initiatives will be driven by concrete need and evidence and will stem from our knowledge and experience around these specific thematic areas.

I was also pleased to see that the evaluation identified innovation as a strong aspect of the portfolio. We need to build on this positive achievement and take it to larger scale through stronger and more systematic scaling up efforts.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our challenge is how to make these results sustainable?

In this regard, IFAD will intensify the work with the Government of Morocco and other partners and stakeholders to define the suitable mechanisms for stronger focus on sustainability. We need innovative approaches, simple and focused projects, clear exit strategy and increased involvement of stakeholders.

Finally, I would like to confirm IFAD's commitment to align its vision with the new agriculture development strategy, officially launched by his Majesty in February 2020. In this regard, IFAD will seek to:

- (i) Pursue investing in poor areas with a territorial approach and in line with the new GG strategy to foster human development and sustainability;
- (ii) Innovate and contribute to transforming agriculture for more youth inclusion and promotion of employment and entrepreneurship;
- (iii) Promote human and social capital through capacity building of producers organisations at local level;
- (iv) Prepare a KM plan for the IFAD portfolio in Morocco to capitalize the experiences of rural development and build on the wealth of lessons to enhance our non-lending operations;
- (v) Pursue continuous support and mobilize adequate resources to improve the management and implementation of projects in support to PMUs in the field; and

Last but not least,

I would like to thank the Ministry of Agriculture, maritime fisheries, rural development and water and forests, the ministry of Economy and Finance and administration reform for their continuous support to the IFAD-financed activities in the country.

I hope that, together, will be able to take this cooperation to further horizons and higher levels.

Thank you.