

# **Burundi Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation National Workshop**

**(virtual) 24 May 2021**

## **Introductory Statement by Mr Indran Naidoo, Director of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD**

-Honourable Minister of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock  
[Son Excellence Monsieur Déo Guide Rurema]

-Honourable Minister of Finance, Budget and cooperation in economic development...

-Distinguished representatives of the Government of Burundi, Representatives of IFAD, international organizations and partner institutions,

-Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to participate in this virtual National Workshop, co-organized by the Government of Burundi and the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD, in collaboration with the East and Southern Africa Division of IFAD. This is final step of the Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation in Burundi, and we hope to have a productive discussion.

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Government of Burundi, in particular to the Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock and the Ministry of Finance, Budget and cooperation in economic development, for their invaluable support and collaboration throughout this evaluation. Our appreciation also to the programme audit team and project teams for their support and availability to exchange with the evaluation team.

I would also like to recognize the support of the IFAD Programme Management Department, starting with Mr Donal Brown, Associate Vice-President, and Ms Sara Mbago-Bhunu, Director of IFAD's East and Southern Africa Division. My appreciation also goes to the IFAD Country Director ad interim for Burundi, Mr Joseph Olinga-Biwole, who has recently taken over from Ms Aissa Toure.

Finally, I would like to thank the evaluation team, led by Ms Monica Lomena-Gelis, Senior Evaluation Officer of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD, who was supported by a team of national and international consultants. Ms Vanessa Lodi and other administrative IOE staff provided great administrative support to the team and to the organization of today's event.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me highlight the importance of the independent evaluation function. The Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD undertakes impartial and evidence-based evaluations of projects, country programmes and corporate policies, to assess the results achieved and to generate lessons to enhance the impact of IFAD's projects on people's lives. I hope this evaluation will contribute to improving the effectiveness of the strategic partnership between the Burundian government and IFAD. A final agreement, summarizing the measures taken for the implementation of accepted recommendations, will be signed.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

86 per cent of the population in Burundi lives in rural areas and the country has the second highest demographic density in the continent. In 2019, agriculture represented 29 per cent of the GDP value added, and it remains the main source of employment and raw material for the agricultural industry.

Since 1979, IFAD has financed 14 projects in Burundi, totalling US\$ 668,9 million in loans and grants. Our evaluation, which covers ten projects funded during the period 2009-2020, found that the country programme funded by IFAD (with co-financing by the OPEC Fund for International Development, the World Food Programme, the African Development Bank, the European Union, the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program and the Belgian Fund for Food Security) showed a remarkable resilience despite the fragility situations faced by the country, mainly related to institutional and political, economic and environmental and climate change aspects.

Interventions on **marshland development and the rehabilitation of feeder roads**, along with the support to better access to **quality seeds and value addition of rice** have contributed to increasing levels of production and yields, and consequently, revenues and living conditions of the targeted farmers.

Another area of success has been the restoration of the decimated national herd after various years of conflict, the **improvement of livestock management and value addition in the milk value chain**. Projects have combined **environmental watershed restoration** activities with **'food-for-work' initiatives**, targeting the most vulnerable population.

The country programme has devoted increasing attention to fostering **access of smallholder producers to agricultural markets**. To this end, the projects financed the construction and rehabilitation of feeder roads and market infrastructure. My colleague Monica will present some of the results in terms of price increases for various smallholder products.

IFAD interventions in Burundi have included few **activities targeting women**, which contributed, to varying degrees, to increasing their economic empowerment, and, to a lesser extent, to improving access to productive resources and reducing their hardship and workload at household level.

The combination of income-generating activities and micro-projects with training and nutritional education measures tested at a pilot level proved to be effective to reduce **child malnutrition rates** in the intervention areas. However, in the course of the period evaluated, investments on providing basic services to the communities (such as access to drinking water, sanitization, and functional literacy) were reduced among the budget of projects. Additional efforts of coordination with other partners are necessary here.

Finally, I would like to highlight three important recommendations of the evaluation.

1. First, there is a need to consolidate a holistic approach to pro-poor value chains, working from the various phases of production to the final market destinations. The inter-professional platforms

and programme contracts with the private sector need to be consolidated.

2. Second, we need to prioritize strategies and actions to reduce land pressure and facilitate access to assets for the most vulnerable. The intensification of production on the hills and the focus on high-value crops should be accompanied with land tenure management and measures to help the most vulnerable to access land and job opportunities.
3. Lastly, the Government needs to approve and enforce the regulatory and financial frameworks to ensure the transfer of assets, including rural infrastructure, to operators capable of ensuring their functionality and future sustainability

As evaluators, we have provided an impartial assessment of IFAD's programme in Burundi. Now, with your support and active participation, we can gain a better understanding of future opportunities and ways to overcome constraints to promote more inclusive, sustainable and resilient transformation in smallholder farming. I look forward to a fruitful discussion.

Thank you for your attention.