

A Pro-poor and People-centered Response to Climate Change

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International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

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Work relates to Adaptation X Mitigation X

1. What is your organization doing to advance pro-poor and people-centered climate change?

IFAD is reviewing its strategy to ensure that climate change measures are included in every project and programme and that poor rural people are given access to the technologies and innovations they need to adapt to climate change and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It is reflecting on how to contribute to mitigation programmes in a way that will make them beneficial to rural poor people. By December 2009, to coincide with the Bali Action Plan, IFAD will implement its own climate change strategy with a special focus on youth, agriculture and the rural environment.

Efforts to combat deforestation, soil degradation and desertification are central to IFAD's operations. IFAD's very existence had its roots in the fight against desertification. The decision to create IFAD was taken in 1974 in the wake of the great droughts and famines that had struck Africa in the previous six years. From 1999 to 2005, IFAD committed about US\$2 billion to programmes and projects related to the objectives of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Approximately 70 percent of IFAD-support programmes and projects are in ecologically fragile environments that are prone to severe environmental degradation.

A number of the characteristics of IFAD's approach to its mission are those likely to enhance the effectiveness of pro-poor climate change efforts. These include:

- Involvement of the rural poor in designing and implementing projects;
- Support for collective approaches;
- Building on traditional and indigenous peoples' knowledge
- Mainstreaming gender issues;
- Building capacities;
- Established mechanisms to promote access to land and natural resources.

IFAD is a GEF executing agency with recognized expertise in land degradation. Under its current GEF engagement strategy, IFAD is exploring links between sustainable land management operations and climate change activities.

The following are examples of current **adaption activities**, which fall into four main groups:

Improvement of agricultural techniques

- In Malawi, an IFAD-supported project is helping reduce the risks associated with rainfed farming by supporting rehabilitation and development of new irrigation systems, reservoirs, and rainwater harvesting structures.
- In Senegal, IFAD has supported the introduction and promotion of drip irrigation

Promotion of sustainable natural resources management

- An IFAD-supported project in Sudan is providing a rangeland management plan encompassing suitable migratory stock routes, the development of properly located stock water points and an environment conservation policy.
- Increasing negotiation and mediation capacities of populations and their organizations to achieve collaborative, sustainable solutions to natural resource management challenges.

Coping with disaster impacts and risk preparedness

- Vulnerability assessment and adaptation measures for climate change are part of a project to promote restoration and sustainable use of ecosystems along the east coast of Sri Lanka
- A weather-based index insurance project to help poor farmers in China. Farmers are better able to manage risk and may be more comfortable investing in agricultural activities that require a higher initial investment.

Promotion of income diversification

- Grant to PhytoTrade Africa to support the creation of new value chains from tree products in arid zones, beverages, cosmetic oils, health care products in eight countries in eastern and southern Africa.
- Support for non-farm activities, such as ecotourism in Mexico and India.

IFAD does relatively less in **mitigation**, but components of some projects contribute indirectly to mitigation, for example:

- Reforestation projects in the Himalayas and Yemen.
- Solar power systems and biogas projects in China to help address the energy needs of poor households.
- Rangeland rehabilitation to improve productivity, soil cover, regeneration of medicinal and aromatic plants and improved soil water infiltration.

2. What is, in your view, the most critical gap or unaddressed issue in the international negotiations towards a pro-poor climate regime?

Remarkably little has been said or written about the people who will feel the impact most – the poor rural people of developing countries – and even less attention has been given to how they can contribute to slowing its advance. Global efforts will be more effective if the role of poor rural people as custodians of the natural resource base is recognized, and they are enabled to become key players in designing and implementing mitigation measures.

The concerns about the rights of local people living on forest lands remain in the background. In particular, such concerns include how much these people will share in REDD benefits, and how robust coordination and interaction will be between national forestry agencies and local government authorities in implementing such an innovative scheme.

3. Do you plan to address this issue? If yes, how? What are the challenges you see in addressing this gap?

IFAD's climate change strategy is still in the process being developed. We are considering our particular value added with respect to advocating or supporting advocacy on issues such as those identified above. Most immediately, we will be participating in the High-Level Conference on World Food Security and the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy in early June.