

Working together

I S S U E

7

DECEMBER 2005

FAO | IFAD | WFP



Tsunami: responding to an unprecedented emergency

OVERVIEW

The Rome-based agencies all responded immediately to the unprecedented challenge of the Asian tsunami of December 2004. Within days, WFP had moved thousands of tons of food aid to the tsunami zone to avert large-scale hunger. WFP's efforts now are transitioning to rehabilitation and recovery, focusing on providing assistance to vulnerable populations such as displaced people, mothers and children. Meanwhile, FAO is helping the governments and communities of tsunami-affected countries in planning the rehabilitation of the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors. FAO's role is to coordinate and provide technical assistance and policy guidance for all of these sectors, together with the provision of direct assistance. IFAD has been mobilising funds to rebuild livelihoods and build capacity in coastal communities. The efforts, while separate, have been complementary, and the scope for cooperation is growing as the emergency phase ends and long-term recovery and reconstruction pick up steam.



WFP/FAO cooperation in Indonesia

In Indonesia, WFP and FAO regularly cooperate to produce Crop and Food Supply Assessments. The latest was produced in March. For WFP, this assessment helped refine the target criteria for food assistance.

Discussions are also underway to set up a Food, Livelihood and Nutrition Surveillance System under which WFP and FAO would cooperate to provide technical backup to the Indonesian ministries of Health and Agriculture. The surveillance system will be designed to monitor the health and nutritional status of the population in order to identify high-risk groups, design appropriate interventions and determine the impact of these interventions. It is hoped the system will begin operations in July.

WFP

The World Food Programme launched a massive and immediate response to the 26 December Indian Ocean tsunami. Ships were diverted, personnel moved to the region and a major airlift began to bring food to the survivors. Within days, helicopters were continuously ferrying WFP food down Sumatra's remote western coast, the hardest

hit area in the region. In Sri Lanka, WFP was feeding 750,000 people by January 7.

The relief effort required one of the most complex logistical operations in WFP's history. Supply routes were opened to areas of Indonesia where roads had been washed away by using "floating warehouses" and landing craft. By the end of January, operations involved 6 fixed-wing aircraft, 8 dedicated helicopters, and over 200 trucks. A critical factor was the massive response by WFP's standby partners and WFP staff – 328 of whom came to work on the operation from points around the world. Over 250 additional personnel were recruited locally. By the end of May, WFP had delivered food aid to 2.24 million people across the region.

Operations are now well into the transition from relief to recovery, with a focus on targeting vulnerable populations. School feeding is reaching thousands of students in Sri Lanka and Indonesia, and programmes to support pregnant women, mothers and infants have begun. In the Maldives, aid will continue for families who have lost their livelihoods while food assistance targeted to women continues in affected areas of Somalia. WFP's assistance to affected areas of Thailand and Myanmar has now wrapped up. At the time of writing, WFP was providing food to over 1.5 million people in the tsunami zone, and had dispatched over 130,000 metric tons of food.

WFP assistance will continue to tsunami-hit areas of Indonesia and Sri Lanka through 2006 and 2007 as Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRROs). In Sri Lanka, the protracted operation will cover approximately 1 million people and include assistance to mothers and infants, school feeding, Food for Work programmes, and food aid to displaced populations. In Indonesia, approximately 850,000 people will receive general rations and another 1,275 million will receive supplementary rations. Programmes will include school feeding, Food for Work, capacity building, mother and child health projects, and assistance to displaced populations until their homes and livelihoods are rebuilt.





FAO

The Food and Agriculture Organization is focused on “building back better” the livelihoods of those hardest hit by the tsunami. FAO is currently delivering a US\$56 million assistance programme in affected countries, with a further US\$25 million in the pipeline.

More than 70 international and regional experts have been deployed to help affected countries with needs assessments, coordination, planning and delivery of early recovery and longer-term reconstruction assistance. In Indonesia, for example, FAO supported the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries and the Ministry of Agriculture in the finalization of sectoral programme strategies in Aceh and Nias.

To enable resumption of income generation and food production, FAO is also providing direct assistance in the form of equipment and inputs. Fishers have been provided with boat repairs and engine parts, fishing nets and other equipment. In Sri Lanka, for example, FAO contributed to the repair of over 4,000 fishing boats and 1,000 boat engines through its partnership with Cey-Nor Foundation, the state-owned boatyard.

FAO has supported thousands of farmers with seeds, tools and motorized cultivators. Irrigation and drainage infrastructure is being repaired, and equipment and guidance for dealing with salt water damage to farm land is being provided. In order to provide income and livelihood opportunities to communities and allow resumption of food production, FAO is also supporting cash-for-work programmes to rehabilitate paddy fields covered with debris.

FAO’s forestry programme for tsunami rehabilitation includes assessment of wood demand and supply for reconstruction of houses and other infrastructure. It has also produced positive results in the form of government action to protect natural forest and wildlife reserves and address the danger of accelerated illegal logging and deforestation.

FAO is also developing a programme to facilitate district- and village-level land use planning to identify the opportunities for forest rehabilitation, reforestation and agroforestry to provide coastal protection and livelihoods for local populations.





IFAD

IFAD's immediate response to the tsunami was to commit to mobilize US\$100 million to support post-emergency recovery in affected areas of India, Indonesia, the Maldives and Sri Lanka.

To date, IFAD has provided US\$33.6 million in interest-free loans from its own resources to meet post-tsunami programme costs. Grants are being sought from cofinancing partners to cover the total cost of rehabilitation and recovery programmes. This includes US\$30 million in grants needed to get a recovery programme underway in Aceh, Indonesia. This six-year programme, designed in partnership with affected communities, the provincial government of Aceh and the Ministry of Agriculture, will support reconstruction of approximately 250 villages.

In Indonesia, IFAD extended the area of the Income-Generating Project for Marginal Farmers and Landless (Phase III) and reallocated US\$3.2 million from the project's funds to finance the rehabilitation of livelihoods in the worst-affected rural districts of the provinces of Aceh and North Sumatra.

In India, the US\$68.7 million Post-Tsunami Sustainable Livelihoods Programme for the Coastal Communities of Tamil Nadu will directly benefit about 140,000 households in 200 coastal villages affected by the tsunami. IFAD will provide a US\$15 million loan and a total of US\$38.8 million has so far been provided by partners in the country, including banks, microfinance institutions and the Government.

In Maldives, the US\$5.0 million Post-Tsunami Agricultural and Fisheries Rehabilitation Programme will focus on restoring the fisheries and agriculture sectors. IFAD is providing an initial US\$2.0 million loan and a US\$200,000 grant for the programme, and is committed to mobilizing another US\$2.1 million loan. The programme will provide more than 8,000 fishers and 20,000 small farmers with tools, equipment and facilities, so they can re-establish their productive activities.

A new agricultural produce market will be built in the capital, Malé, to help establish marketing channels for producers on small islands.

Two new programmes have been approved for Sri Lanka: the US\$4.7 million Post-Tsunami Livelihoods Support and Partnership Programme, and the US\$33.5 million Post-Tsunami Coastal Rehabilitation and Resource Management Programme. IFAD loans worth a total of US\$16.6 million have been approved for the programmes, and the Fund is committed to mobilizing two other loans for the same amount. The first programme will support rapid rehabilitation and development of essential infrastructure, including housing and social and community buildings, while the second is a more comprehensive medium-term recovery programme for coastal communities.

The Italian Government will provide approximately US\$2.0 million for the programmes in Sri Lanka and Maldives.

IFAD has also mobilized more than US\$7.0 million from the Global Environment Facility to restore and conserve the coastal ecosystem in Sri Lanka.

FAO's Investment Centre assisted IFAD in responding to the tsunami disaster in both the Maldives and Sri Lanka. An Investment Centre team designed Post-Tsunami Agricultural and Fisheries Rehabilitation Programme for the Maldives.

In Sri Lanka, IFAD and FAO worked together on policy studies on land tenure, gender and land, and on managing land conflicts, which contributed to the design of the Post-Tsunami Livelihood Support and Partnership Programme. ◆



The example of Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, FAO, WFP and IFAD support the Government's goal that by 2007 no one should be hungry. Much of the agencies' work draws on mapping, by WFP, which was in the front line feeding the population after the war ravaged agriculture.

FAO's first operation in post-war Sierra Leone allowed farmers to make educational trips to farm study centres in Ghana and Uganda to see training programmes under way there. "When they saw the programmes they said they wanted to do something like that but using their national expertise," says Kevin Gallagher, an FAO senior programme development officer. "Then they opened national workshops to define the kind of work that had to be done with research, universities and NGOs."

IFAD is working in two districts in the country, supporting the post-conflict recovery of rural communities and farming activities development, while laying the basis for long-term rehabilitation and participatory development.

Together in the drive to achieve Millennium Goal Number One

FAO, IFAD and WFP are accelerating their efforts to help countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). More than 1 billion people live in extreme poverty, suffering hunger or undernourishment. The vast majority – about 810 million women, men and children – live in rural areas, where they depend on agriculture and related activities for their survival.

The three Rome-based agencies agree that none of the Goals can be achieved unless extremely poor people, especially those living in rural areas, are supported in their struggle to emerge from poverty and hunger. Consequently, the agencies are focusing their efforts on the targets of the first Goal, to reduce by half by 2015 the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and hunger.

They are advocating a twin-track approach that combines immediate assistance for the poor and hungry with long-term development programmes that boost productivity, create employment and increase the value of people's assets. Programmes and policies must focus where they are needed most – in rural areas and in agriculture. The agencies agree that if real progress is to be made, the international agricultural trading system must become fairer, offering developing countries the same chance to earn export income from their commodities, while ensuring reliable and affordable food imports in countries that need them.

FAO analysis indicates that an additional US\$24 billion in public investment will be needed to achieve the World Food Summit goal of reducing by half the number of chronically hungry by 2015 – an even more ambitious hunger target than that of Millennium Development Goal 1.

In a statement to ECOSOC in June, 2005, the heads of the three agencies said that, "tackling poverty will not automatically take care of hunger. In fact, research suggests that developing countries that focus exclusively on poverty – without special attention to hunger – will take a generation longer to make real progress on improving their people's nutrition and health."

By encouraging investment in rural development and agriculture, the Rome-based agencies want to support developing countries in creating vibrant economies, in which people can provide for themselves. This means investments in increasing productivity, in rural financial and service institutions and in markets, all backed by policy reforms.

Immediate, direct and well targeted assistance to get food to hungry people, prevent disease, send children to school, and rebuild infrastructure shattered by armed conflicts is the twin to longer-term investment in rural development. Specific interventions can include: provision of bed nets to fight malaria or bore wells for safe drinking water; water control, fertilizers and improved seeds to raise crop yields; school meals, food-for-work programmes, emergency help after natural disasters or

war, and nutritional programmes for vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, small children and people living with HIV/AIDS.

The three agencies are strengthening their collaboration to ensure that the twin-track approach works. FAO's technical expertise in agriculture supports rural development, while WFP's direct feeding gives people the strength they need to work, and school feeding helps build healthy, well educated workforces. IFAD's almost 200 ongoing poverty eradication projects increase rural poor people's access to financial services, markets, technology, land and other resources, while also building the capacity of rural poor people and their organizations to lead their own development.

They are also seeking joint solutions to meet the other MDGs in countries around the world:

- **Goal 2 — Achieve universal primary education:** poor families often cannot afford to send their children to school, but school feeding and other projects boost families' incomes and encourage school attendance.
- **Goal 3 — Promote gender equality and empower women:** when women have secure access to food, and productive assets like land, agricultural inputs, water and financial capital, they can increase their earnings and financial status, leading to better lives for themselves and their families.
- **Goal 4 — Reduce child mortality:** hunger and malnutrition are behind the deaths of more than 6 million children under five each year. Addressing hunger and poverty is essential if this goal is to be reached.
- **Goal 5 — Improve maternal health:** community development programmes, labour-saving technologies, better nutrition and greater household food security, especially in rural areas, all contribute to better maternal health and reduced mortality.
- **Goal 6 — Combat AIDS, malaria and other diseases:** malnourished bodies are more prone to disease and infection; ensuring better nutrition and food production are crucial to keeping populations healthy.
- **Goal 7 — Ensure environmental sustainability:** secure land tenure, sustainable and integrated management practices and restoration of degraded environments help poor people avoid over-exploitation of the resources on which their livelihoods depend.
- **Goal 8 — Develop a global partnership for development:** FAO, IFAD and WFP are working with other partners to promote the International Alliance Against Hunger and to raise awareness about the links between rural poverty and international trade practices, intellectual rights, debt and aid.

In New York, in June 2005, the three agencies took stock of progress made towards the MDGs. While some agencies and donors have expressed frustration at the speed of progress against hunger in particular, FAO, IFAD and WFP remain convinced that, with concerted action and adequate resources, it is possible to achieve the MDGs. All three agency heads have urged their staff to cooperate and support national alliances in the field, bringing together all of the force, energy and resources available for each country to beat hunger in the 10 years to 2015. ♦

The International Alliance Against Hunger

The IAAH seeks to raise public awareness about poverty and about the first Millennium Development Goal's target of reducing by half the number of hungry people by 2015. The Alliance seeks to inform and influence decision makers and opinion makers at all levels – governments, community groups, NGOs, private sector and more. Local groups can be especially effective in spreading the word that global hunger does not make sense.

Another key message is that AIDS sufferers who are also undernourished have an even harder time combatting the disease.

Alliance Against Hunger gaining momentum

The International Alliance Against Hunger is rapidly becoming an influential global partnership determined to make the fight against hunger and poverty more effective.

Officially launched on World Food Day 2003, the Alliance grew from an idea put forward at the 1996 World Food Summit by German President Johannes Rau. Momentum was added in 2001 when leaders attending the World Food Summit: *five years later* sought ways to accelerate progress towards the goal of reducing by half the number of hungry people in the world. As the international community now works to meet the Millennium Development Goals – the first of which is aimed squarely at reducing hunger and poverty – still greater meaning is given to the role of the Alliance.

With FAO, WFP, IFAD and IPGRI as its founders, the International Alliance against Hunger counts among its members international NGOs representing some 35 million people, including Action Aid International and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), as well as religious and social movements such as Caritas Internationalis. The Alliance also works with private companies and entrepreneurs to spearhead national alliances aimed at coordinating the campaign to eradicate hunger at country level.

“We think that everyone is accountable,” said Eva Clayton, FAO Assistant Director-General and special advisor to FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf on the Alliance. “We recognize that joining hands between agencies already committed means that we can be more effective. We are looking at ways of using not just new converts but old converts to the fight against hunger.”

Among NGOs, Johannesburg-based Action Aid has been active in lobbying the industrialized G8 countries to reduce poverty in Africa in efforts complementing those of IFAD, FAO and WFP in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), charting a course to develop agriculture, trade and market access in African nations.

President Rau recognized that the “Millennium Declaration is a pledge by governments which nonetheless is still too abstract for the majority of people in industrialised countries, in spite of intensive information and PR work ... Intensifying partnership initiatives between groups in richer and poorer countries would be a valuable approach.”

Since 2003, support for the IAAH has snowballed, spawning 36 national alliances of which 22 are government-led and 14 led by civil society. A further 53 countries have expressed interest in forming national alliances.

For FAO, the IAAH provides an extremely useful framework for learning from beneficiaries of other agencies' projects what people think they need. Ms Clayton recently was invited to join an IFAD-sponsored mission in India to see the type of project run by the Fund there, talk with participants and see how the national alliance has started work in northeastern Indian states that recently joined.

With its emphasis on smallholders, IFAD's work is more in keeping with the philosophy of the IAAH than with the grandiose national development projects of decades ago, often imposed on people at great expense.

The Rome-based food agencies are the mainstays of the IAAH secretariat and all have financed the IAAH website. The IAAH has no separate budget. It uses existing resources from agency special projects budgets or receives adhoc financing or assistance. One agency has provided the IAAH with a consultant. IPGRI organised a major symposium in India with help from IFAD. The Alliance is a joint effort evolving at many levels.

Some of the national alliances have been started by governments who invited civil society to join in, and others by civil society that drew in government.

- In Latin America, Brazil and its President, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, are particularly active in the Alliance. President Lula launched a “Zero-Hunger Project” to end hunger within his four years of office. Brazil also has twinned with Haiti to develop a project in that country with FAO, IFAD and WFP participating at the local level. The IAAH participated in seminars held at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in January 2005 to promote national alliances.
- In the United States, where the Alliance is civil society-led, it sponsored the Hunger Day Advocacy initiative directed at the US Congress and President Bush with involvement by a large number of NGOs and different religious bodies. In January 2004 Bread for the World, an Alliance partner, played a role in winning an increase in US funding for poverty-focused development assistance.
- In Madagascar, civil society's involvement in the national alliance is ensured by the participation of Caritas and Catholic Relief Services. ◆



FAO/J. Balcerl



FAO/J. Balcerl



IFAD/L. Salimei

A long and fruitful collaboration in Central America

IFAD and FAO are contributing to a new phase in a long-running development programme in Central America. The two agencies have been cooperating in the Regional Unit for Technical Assistance (RUTA), established in 1982. IFAD's Executive Board in 2004 approved a grant of US\$1,23 million for RUTA Phase VI. FAO contributed \$570,000 essentially in staff assistance.

RUTA is a joint initiative for rural development that brings together seven national governments and seven international agencies. Its overall aim is to reduce poverty in the region's rural areas and to support sustainable development.

In Central America, about two thirds of poor people live in rural areas. Development progress in the region as a whole has been uneven over the past decade.

The programme unites the governments of Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama with seven development partners: the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland's Department for International Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, the International Food Policy Research Institute and the World Bank, in addition to FAO and IFAD.

RUTA works to reduce rural poverty by formulating policies and projects, leading rural studies, assisting with project implementation and facilitating dialogue. In a part of the world where widespread poverty and environmental degradation form a vicious circle, it also promotes sustainable management of natural resources, lending technical support to a number of projects in the region that aim to protect the environment.

The programme has a particular focus on improving living conditions and incomes for women and indigenous peoples. In



IFAD/L. Dematteis

an age of rapidly advancing technology, addressing loss of livelihood and the problems that result is another priority area.

RUTA usually works at the institutional level. The programme cooperates with governments to identify the most effective ways of reducing poverty – the policies and strategies that are stepping stones to a better future for rural poor people. Among its partners are government ministries (above all those concerned with agriculture and the environment), international agencies, project implementation units and organizations representing rural poor people.

Capacity building is a vital part of RUTA's work. The key objective is to strengthen the institutional environment, enabling the agricultural sector in these countries to deal with changes in the global market for agricultural products. This might mean, for example, working with agricultural colleges or other service providers to help producer associations develop the skills and knowledge they need to participate in international markets; or providing technical assistance to analysts in agriculture ministries, so that they can evaluate the impact of different policies.

At the regional level, RUTA also works in the area of international agricultural trade. It is currently analyzing the impact of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), helping governments and their populations prepare to take advantage of the opportunities that should result, while minimizing potential negative impacts. ♦



Mountain Day to urge low-impact tourism

"Sustainable Tourism for Poverty Alleviation in Mountain Areas" is the message of this year's International Mountain Day (11 December 2005). FAO, the agency designated to lead observance of the Day, is producing a series of communication products on the theme. It is also encouraging Rome-based organizations including IFAD and WFP, representatives of countries, NGOs and major groups to promote events at the national and international level in observance of the Day. The aim is to raise awareness about the perils and potentials of tourism in mountains – home to the world's poorest and hungriest.

In calling for sustainable tourism, FAO and its partners are urging types of tourism that have low impact on the environment and local culture, employment- and income-generating benefits for local communities and a conservation effect on local ecosystems. For further information, contact: info@mountainday.org





A powerful partnership in India

For the children of Parsatoli village in the Indian state of Chhattisgarh, getting to school was extremely difficult in the best of times. The nearest school was a considerable distance away. The village, which is surrounded by the Kurkut River and its tributaries, was completely cut off during the monsoon season. For four months, this meant no schooling at all.

Today classes can continue all year because the community has “Janbhagidari,” as the villagers have named the two-room school they built themselves. (The name means “people’s participation.”) Now, they have hired a teacher and hope their school will become affiliated with the state system. By ensuring year-round education, Janbhagidari is helping to give local children a more promising future.

The school is one result of the villagers’ participation in the Jharkhand-Chhattisgarh Tribal Development Programme.

The programme in Chhattisgarh and the neighbouring state of Jharkhand focuses on marginal households, women, landless people, hill cultivators and tribal groups. It enables them to participate in their own development through local self-government, and aims to improve their food security and livelihood opportunities.

This eight-year, US\$41.7 million programme is partly funded by IFAD. WFP is co-financing it by providing participants with food under its Food for Work programme. It is being implemented by the respective state governments through two autonomous societies. Local non-governmental organizations have helped in mobilizing the communities. An NGO known as Raigarh Sahyog Samiti, for example, supported the establishment of the Janbhagidari school.

IFAD and WFP have worked together in India since 2001. The partnership enables them to pool their strengths and learn from each other. WFP contributes its operational expertise, acquired through its field offices and collaboration over many years with central and state governments and local NGOs. IFAD lends its experience of lessons learned through working with rural poor people and other partners.

WFP’s food assistance in IFAD-supported projects has proved a potent instrument for helping the most food-insecure and vulnerable households, and women.

The two agencies are working together on three programmes in India. A second tribal programme was launched two years ago in western Orissa, one of the poorest and most deprived regions in the country. Three-quarters of the population in the project area live below the poverty line.

The agencies are also collaborating on the Livelihood Security Project for Earthquake-Affected Rural Households in Gujarat. In the wake of the serious quake

there in January 2001, some 20,000 people lost their lives. It is a project of special significance for WFP, which had an emergency team on the ground within days of the disaster. The project aims to secure the livelihoods of economically vulnerable households and help participants prepare to contend with any future crises. ◆



Joint missions as important as ever

FAO and WFP's Joint Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions play a critical role when humanitarian agencies, governments and donors plan their food security interventions. In 2004 and early 2005, joint missions sounded the alarm on the looming food crisis in Niger and helped estimate the impact of the tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia.

Some 22 joint WFP/FAO assessment missions were fielded in 2004, and six in the first half of 2005. They benefited from intense efforts to improve methodology and transparency, including the participation of donors as observers. In 2006, the guidelines for Joint Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions will be revised. FAO will provide improved methods for estimating commercial imports and the contribution of non-cereal foods, while WFP will emphasize the distinction between chronic and transitory food insecurity, and further exploration of non-food responses.



In brief

New report on food security in Africa: IFAD, WFP AND FAO contribute

During 2005, IFAD, WFP and FAO worked with the African Union on a major new report on food security in Africa. The report, commissioned by the African Union, was presented to African Heads of State at their summit meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, in July 2005.

The report is designed to provide a food-security roadmap – giving detailed information about the current situation in Africa and indicating the way forward – for use by governments, NGOs, the private sector, and bilateral and multilateral partners.

“Each country will develop its own food security policy and strategy, drawing on NEPAD’s Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme,” said Haladou Salha, WFP’s Senior Advisor for Africa. NEPAD is the New Partnership for Africa’s Development.

The African Union plans to update the report every year, with the continued cooperation of IFAD, WFP and FAO. Also on the drafting committee are the NEPAD Secretariat and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). The regional African economic communities, such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), are also being consulted.

“The report will have wide-ranging implications for the way forward to tackle food security in Africa,” said Mohamed Béavogui, Director of IFAD’s Western and Central Africa Division. “It will further enhance the commitment of governments to putting food security at the top of their development agendas with a view to combating rural poverty.”

Agencies fight locust upsurge together

A massive Desert Locust upsurge infested 18 African countries during the summer of 2004, threatening millions of hectares of crops. Responding to the call of FAO, several donors including IFAD and the affected countries came forward and contributed some US\$ 80 million towards a control campaign. Despite commendable mobilization efforts, and because of the magnitude of resources involved, the funds did not arrive in time and a major control programme had to be launched. Nearly 13 million hectares of infested land had to be treated to protect crops.

The response of FAO, IFAD and WFP to the locust crisis underscored the strong relationship among the three agencies. IFAD funded two projects managed by FAO in support of 10 affected countries. WFP provided airplanes to transport pesticides to strategic locations. Joint crop and food supply assessment missions in nine affected countries were carried out before the end of the main harvest to assess the needs for food and agricultural assistance in view of the 2004 United Nations Consolidated Appeal Process for West Africa.

Current activities focus on monitoring the locust situation and building up the capacity of affected governments to respond to future Desert Locust emergencies. This also includes the capacity to prevent and monitor the environmental effects of pesticides. For the medium term, IFAD is supporting the testing and validation of innovative, environmentally friendly, preventive (rather than curative) approaches to desert locust management, based on the lessons from the current campaign.



FAO/G. Diana



FAO/G. Diana



FAO/G. Diana

Building capacity in rural finance

Understanding and systematically applying recommended practices is challenging in any industry and especially important when it comes to money. FAO and IFAD have a long history in rural finance practice, research and knowledge sharing. The two organizations are currently collaborating on a rural finance training curriculum that is being taught in leading micro-enterprise training centres and further developed as distance learning modules. Some of the training material will be made available soon to a larger audience in the field via the Web-based Rural Finance Learning Centre (www.ruralfinance.org). Through the Rural Finance Learning Centre, FAO, IFAD, the World Bank and GTZ support capacity building and diffusion of best practices in rural finance.



Poverty Reduction Strategy: rural focus initiative

The Poverty Reduction Strategy approach was initiated in 1999 by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund as a way of making development aid more effective in reducing poverty. Today, some 35 low-income countries have developed poverty reduction strategy papers, or PRSPs. These strategies are now seen as the country-level framework for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Concerned that the rural sector has not received adequate attention in poverty reduction strategy processes, FAO, IFAD, WFP and other agencies are working together to help countries sharpen the rural focus of their PRSPs.

The initiative focuses on strengthened country-level engagement and collaboration to support:

- formulation and implementation of sector policies and strategies;
- capacity building in economic and sector work;
- participatory monitoring and evaluation systems, and poverty and social impact assessment;
- empowerment of rural stakeholders, producers' associations and decentralised entities through institutional and organizational strengthening and participation in policy processes.

Reviews and case studies will document successes, failures and lessons learned from experience, and fill gaps in existing knowledge. Advocacy, networking and communication will be employed to influence the international agenda.

Agencies team up to build management skills

Through a unique project called the Management Development Centre, WFP, FAO and IFAD are working collaboratively to develop management skills among their staff. The Centre – funded by the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) and jointly organized by the Human Resources divisions of the three agencies – provides initial two-day sessions that start participants on a learning curve to greater management ability.

Currently each agency sends a maximum of four staff to each Management Development Centre session. Six sessions have been held since the programme began in October 2004. Participants undergo a series of assessments of their management-related competencies, interpersonal abilities, and communication and presentation skills. After an exhaustive review, the candidates emerge with an indication of their strengths, areas for improvement and suggestions for how to move forward. Then, each participant draws up an Individual Learning Plan for a continuous long-term process of development and improvement.

The response from participants has been uniformly favourable. "My assessors were very astute, insightful and created an enabling environment," commented one participant. "The various tools proved very helpful in identifying my strengths," noted another. The agencies will continue to collaborate on this initiative and identify other opportunities for staff development for UN Rome-based staff.



Former US President Bill Clinton conferred with the three executive heads of the Rome-based agencies in May 2005 in his role as Special UN Envoy for Tsunami Recovery.

Different mandates . . . a common vision

FAO was founded in 1945 with a mandate to raise nutritional levels and living standards, improve agricultural productivity and better the conditions of rural people. FAO is the leading agency for technical expertise in food security, agriculture, forestry, fisheries and rural development, and in the sustainable management of natural resources essential over the long term.



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IFAD was established in 1977 to help developing countries fight rural poverty and hunger by mobilizing financial resources for rural and agricultural development. IFAD enables rural poor people to overcome poverty by: strengthening their capacity and that of their organizations; improving equitable access to productive natural resources and technology; and increasing access to financial services and markets.



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WFP, the food agency of the United Nations system, was created in 1963. It provides food aid to save lives in emergency situations, improve the nutrition and quality of life of the most vulnerable people at critical times in their lives, help build infrastructural assets and promote the self-reliance of poor people and communities.



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