



Mainstreaming Communication for Development in Policies and Programmes

Enabling social inclusion to support food and nutrition security, resilient rural livelihoods and family farming
Rome, 16-18 September 2014

Introduction and background

With the purpose of upholding the fundamental role of Communication for Development in fostering dialogue, ownership and the active participation of stakeholders in development programmes, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) will host in September 2014 the XIII UN Inter-Agency Roundtable on Communication for Development. In line with General Assembly Resolution 50/130 the overall objective of the Round Table is to discuss the role of Communication for Development within the UN system, mechanisms for strengthening inter-agency collaboration, and the application of Communication for Development principles and strategies to maximize the impact of development programmes.

The XIII Round Table will specifically focus on how communication can improve the quality of policy processes in Food and Nutrition Security, Family Farming and Resilient Rural Livelihoods through wider access to information, greater citizen – government interaction, public and private sector partnerships, and knowledge sharing.

Communication for Development (ComDev) within the UN System

The UN Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development is an informal forum for UN Agencies, donors and practitioners to exchange ideas, harmonize approaches, share experiences and develop partnerships in this field. Since 1988 the Round Tables have been organized on a rotational basis by interested UN agencies under the leadership of UNESCO. The themes are usually selected according to the specific technical area of the host organization but with a broad outlook to allow all participating Agencies, to contribute conceptually to the discussions within their own individual mandates. **The Round Table remains the main vehicle for advocating the added value of ComDev in development programming across the UN system.**

Communication for Development is well established in the UN system, However, levels of activity, methodologies, resources and the position of ComDev within the various organizations vary widely according to individual institutional mandates. Across the UN system, the participatory and inclusive approaches associated with ComDev are essential elements in a broad range of sectoral projects, including governance, livelihoods, environment, education, health and



gender. In all these projects, ComDev approaches are used to facilitate linkages, increase knowledge and awareness, build community and government human resource capacities, change behavior and practices, shift attitudes and social norms, enhance self-esteem and self-efficacy in and among communities. ComDev tools are also a central element of the responses of several United Nations organizations to natural disasters.

Objectives of the XIII Round Table

The XIII Round Table aims to identify needs, opportunities, and concrete areas of action for mainstreaming ComDev into both policies and programmes. It will specifically discuss: 1) current initiatives and challenges at the global, regional and national level with regards to food and nutrition security, family farming and resilient rural livelihoods, 2) advocate for ComDev integration into policies and programmes and 3) explore concrete collaborative opportunities for replication and scale up, particularly in those countries where communication is rooted in the broader policy context with strong institutional backing.

By achieving these goals, the XIII UNRT on ComDev aims to enhance and mainstream stakeholder participation in development programmes, and to foster greater cooperation and collaboration between UN agencies.

Proposed Themes and discussion topics

The Round Table is organized around the broad theme of: “Mainstreaming Communication for Development in Policies and Programmes”. This theme was chosen because of the increasing need to engage beneficiaries, policy makers, researchers and development stakeholders in a constant dialogue on policy processes; their contribution and sense of ownership are intrinsic to the design and the implementation of a policy, particularly in the current difficult social and economic climate.

Communication is essential for creating open and inclusive national dialogues on policy options, fostering a public culture of citizen–government dialogue, addressing stakeholders’ expectations and promoting transparency and accountability. In addition, the need for individuals and communities to participate in development activities makes communication for building trust and consensus on the development agenda an important goal of governments and societies at large.

While the main theme provides the overall orientation of the RT and the initial momentum for discussion, the three general categories of **food and nutrition security, family farming and resilient rural livelihoods** reflect the concerns and challenges that participants are expected to explore from their individual and institutional perspectives.

Under each thematic category a number of sub-topics have been identified as possible entry points for discussion and contribution by all participating agencies. These are:

Food and Nutrition Security

- Create a process in which stakeholders learn and **innovate** together (bridging the gap between scientific knowledge and local knowledge)
- **Facilitate networking**, knowledge sharing and interaction among institutions, producers' organizations and others in the agricultural innovation system.
- **Developing** agricultural innovation capacity within family farming
- **Promote** family farmers' proven technologies and practices **Platforms**

Resilient Rural Livelihoods

- **Enhancing** climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction (implementing awareness and educational campaigns to inform and guide the population)
- **Promoting** a sustainable family agriculture, compatible with the conservation of the ecosystem and biodiversity
- **Raise awareness** about preparedness and mitigation activities
- **Promoting active participation** of vulnerable Farmers' communities in risk management plans and policies
- Involving Family Farmers in **monitoring key indicators**
- Implementing **early warning systems** using community-based communication channels
- **Mobilizing the support** of different social sectors to promote rehabilitation and reconstruction in affected farmers' communities

Family Farming

At its 91st Plenary Meeting the UN GA declared 2014 the International Year of Family Farming, and tasked FAO to facilitate its implementation in collaboration with Governments, UNDP, IFAD, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and other relevant organizations of the United Nations system, as well as relevant non-governmental organizations. Since the RT coincides with the IYFF it is proposed that the RT themes be also addressed from a Family Farming perspective.

Family Farming is much more than an agricultural economy model: it is the basis of the sustainable food production, of the management of the environment and its biodiversity. Family Farming issues are quite broad: they range from the challenges of food security and environmental management to the socio-cultural heritage of rural communities. Some potential ideas for contributions and discussion on ComDev policies in support of Family Farming are as follows:

- **Women's role** and contribution to family farming.
- **Education and training** of young farmers and women.

- **Migration vs Inheritance of the family farm** - awareness raising actions to make agriculture attractive, profitable and a credible career to the youth.
- **Policy implications** for family farming - access to land, market information and financial resources.

Venue and Participation

The RT will be held in FAO, Rome, from 16 to 18 September 2014 and is considered as integral to the activities foreseen for the IYFF 2014. It will consist of 2-1/2 day session with all participants and 1/2 day session for the UN agencies core group (internal consultation). The meeting will be attended by approximately 60 people consisting of Communication for Development specialists from UN Agencies and Funds including The World Bank, NGOs and CSOs, bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors, plus a number of invited participants from member countries, projects and civil society organizations. Each agency may have a maximum of four participants including staff and invitees.

All participants should have direct personal or professional experience in Communication for Development and/or on issues related to the theme of the RT. Participants and organizations with different professional profiles may be proposed and discussed within the inter-agency task force. Other forms of virtual participation such as videoconference, will also be explored and agreed upon.

Partner Agencies

Thirteen UN agencies and funds are contributing to the organization of the XIII UN Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development.

- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- International Labour Organization (ILO)
- United Nations Development Group (UNDG)
- Bioversity International
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
- World Bank(WB)
- The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
- The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
- The World Food Programme (WFP)