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COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

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International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD): Outcome and Follow-up

I. Introduction

1. The background on the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD), held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, 7-10 March 2006, is provided in COAG/Inf.9. The FAO Secretariat submitted the outcome of the Conference to the Committee on World Food Security at its 32nd session in September 2006 and to the 131st session of the Council in November 2006. The relevant papers CFS:2006/Inf.11 and CL 131/15 are available on the COAG website. These papers provide the relevant background for the meeting, the outcomes of ICARRD, the follow-up sought from FAO and the guidance sought from CFS and the FAO Council.

II. ICARRD commitments

2. The Final Declaration, adopted by acclamation, sets out the following five commitments that governments undertook to implement in partnership with civil society, FAO and other international and national organizations (para. 30 of the Final Declaration):

We pledge our actions and support to implementing the ICARRD Principles in order to achieve the new vision of agrarian reform and rural development, through the following:

1. We will develop appropriate mechanisms through a lasting platform at global, regional, national and local levels in order to institutionalize social dialogue, cooperation and monitoring and evaluation of progress in agrarian reform and rural development, which are crucial to promote social justice and to enhance an environmentally sustainable agrarian reform and rural development, more focused on the poor and respectful of gender equality.
2. We will recommend that FAO's Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in close coordination with its Committee on Agriculture (COAG), adopt appropriate measures to implement the ICARRD Declaration. In order to monitor the implementation of the

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ICARRD Declaration, we will also recommend that the CFS adopt a set of additional reporting guidelines. These processes should include the participation of civil society, and other UN Organizations dealing with food sovereignty, food security, agrarian reform and rural development.

3. We will support International Partnership Initiatives on agrarian reform and rural development along the lines of the ICARRD Declaration.
4. We propose that the multi-stakeholder dialogue of the Special Forum to be held during the Thirty-second Session of the Committee on World Food Security, September 2006, include an agenda item on agrarian reform and rural development, as an additional follow-up mechanism on the results of ICARRD. This will be an important agenda item to be discussed during the Mid-Term Review of the Progress in the Implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action.
5. We will recommend to the Hundred and Thirty-first Session of the FAO Council, November 2006, to examine the possibility of further follow-up mechanisms designed to assist countries in the implementation of the outcomes of ICARRD.

III. ICARRD follow-up by FAO

3. The FAO Secretariat made provision for a multi-stakeholder dialogue on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development during the Special Forum on the occasion of the 32nd Session of the CFS.

4. In line with the fourth commitment, FAO has made provision for a multi-stakeholder dialogue on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development during the Special Forum on the occasion of the Thirty-second Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), as well as the submission of an Information Document on ICARRD to the CFS.

5. ICARRD called for appropriate measures including a new vision for agrarian reform and rural development and a set of reporting guidelines to implement the ICARRD Declaration. FAO's comparative advantage, based on its stock-taking of good policies and practices on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development exemplified successes from projects that shared and facilitated technical assistance, information exchange, training and education among rural development stakeholders in order to revitalize rural areas. The ICARRD also brought about considerable knowledge and information through plenary and commissions debates, national reports, case studies and technical documents. It concluded that in the context of rapid changes and the devolution of roles and responsibilities to decentralized institutions, and in view of the enhanced role of civil society and farmers' organizations and partnerships between the public and private sectors in many countries, there is a need to map out the impact of current agricultural and rural development policies on the diversity and dynamics of rural areas within an integrated and territorial approach. As such, the need to identify useful benchmarks and measurable indicators that already exist can contribute to the process of reporting and follow-up to ICARRD.

6. Modalities for follow-up were discussed at the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (Caracas, April 2006) which, inter alia, proposed the establishment of a Special Initiative on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development. The Initiative could contribute to further the development of the lasting platform of dialogue on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development that was created during ICARRD, also at national levels, through the organization of workshops, review of more than 32 case studies and 40 national reports, capacity building, provision of technical assistance and the preparation of national guidelines. A Joint ICARRD follow-up Working Group has been established with key partners to discuss the modalities of the preparation and implementation of this Special Initiative. IFAD and IPC have agreed to be FAO's lead partners in this Joint Working Group while other organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Center on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) and the African Union have expressed interest in participating. The IPC has also put forward proposals on People-Oriented Agrarian Reform (POAR) and on undertaking joint work

on negotiated approaches to territorial development that aims to build capacities of local and community-based organizations, farmers' organizations, cooperatives, and people's organizations.

7. A monitoring system is being developed by the ICARRD Secretariat for the Partnership Initiatives that were launched during ICARRD in order to facilitate the exchange of information on good practices with regard to national policies and programmes for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development using data bases, information and knowledge platforms created for SARD, GAP and other FAO knowledge networks. This process will contribute to knowledge management and the capacity building of partners working on ICARRD follow-up and to supporting priorities such as SARD policies, family farming, agro-ecological approaches, land tenure and land administration, and UN system network on food security and rural development.

8. FAO will assist Member Nations in keeping the new ICARRD vision alive through advocacy in global arenas, as well as regional and national debates and discussions. The Organization will aim to strengthen its partnerships with the regional Rural Development and Agrarian Reform Centres: CIRDAAP, the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Africa (CIRDAFRICA), the Regional Centre on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development for the Near East¹ (CARDNE) and other regional partners in promoting and implementing ICARRD follow-up, including assistance in strengthening and/or revitalizing of these regional organizations, as appropriate, to enable them to serve if so requested as national and regional observatories of Agrarian Reform and Rural Development efforts.

IV. Guidance requested from the CFS

9. In view of the ICARRD outcomes and commitments, in particular commitment 2 of the ICARRD Declaration, and the mandate given to FAO for their implementation, FAO sought the following guidance of the 32nd session CFS in September 2006:

- a) Development of a Special Initiative on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development as a concrete mechanism to implement the ICARRD Declaration, that would leverage funding for ICARRD follow-up and enhance dialogue between interested stakeholders on the issues agreed in the ICARRD Declaration; FAO could provide policy and technical assistance in facilitating the development of platforms for dialogue at global, regional and national levels that advance participatory approaches, social dialogue, cooperation and partnership building among governments, civil society, donors and other partners; and
- b) Development of a set of national guidelines for use by governments in cooperation with civil society and UN organizations in monitoring the implementation of the ICARRD Declaration, including the identification of appropriate indicators and the expansion and refinement of the database on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development.

V. Report of the discussion at the 32nd Session of the CFS

10. The Committee extended its thanks to Brazil for generously hosting the International Conference for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD).

11. The Committee recognized the importance of agrarian reform and rural development for achieving the goal of eradicating hunger and poverty. In this light, the ICARRD Declaration was considered an important accomplishment for placing these issues on the current international agenda. The Committee also stressed the significant and unique role of FAO in supporting the recommendations of the Declaration through various means including strengthening national institutional capacity and empowering women through access to land.

¹ With two new members in 2006, Morocco and Iran

12. Many members acknowledged their continued support of the Joint ICARRD Working Group composed of FAO, IFAD and the International Planning Committee (IPC). Some members expressed the view that the current FAO Reform process should in no way diminish the role of FAO in relation to agrarian reform and rural development. In line with this view, they pointed out that the Sustainable Development Department and Rural Development Division of FAO should continue to support the implementation of ICARRD.

13. Many Members stressed the need to establish a multi-stakeholder platform at global, national and regional levels to institutionalize social dialogue, cooperation, monitoring and evaluation of progress on agrarian reform and rural development as stated in the ICARRD Declaration. Many other Members cautioned against creating new reporting mechanisms and platforms, citing FAO's limited resources and the burdens that it may pose to individual countries. They suggested that countries may report on the implementation of the ICARRD recommendations on a voluntary basis within the regular CFS reporting process.

14. Many Members also recommended the establishment of a data base on land tenure and agrarian reform, which would bring together information on land issues and best practices on agrarian reform and rural development policies. This data base would make use of gender and age disaggregated data. Some members however stated that they could not support these proposals.

15. The Committee recommended that the Committee on Agriculture (COAG), at its next Session, consider the ICARRD recommendations and submit to the CFS, if appropriate, relevant recommendations for consideration at its Thirty-third Session in 2007.

VI. Guidance sought from Council

16. Based on the outcome of 32nd session of CFS, the FAO Secretariat sought the following Guidance from the 131st session of the Council:

In view of the ICARRD outcomes and commitments, and the mandate given to FAO for their implementation, the approval of Council was sought on the following:

- i) Development of a Special Initiative on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development as a concrete follow-up mechanism for ICARRD that will leverage fund raising for the follow-up of the ICARRD and enhance national dialogues between interested stakeholders on the issues that were agreed in the ICARRD Declaration; FAO can provide policy and technical assistance in facilitating the formulation and development of the platforms of dialogue at global, regional and national levels in order to institutionalise participatory approaches, social dialogue, cooperation and partnership building among governments, civil society, donors and other partners in Agrarian Reform and Rural Development; and
- ii) Expansion and refinement of the data base on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, identifying indicators of access to land and other natural resources, and the development of a set of reporting guidelines for use by governments, civil society and UN organizations for monitoring the implementation of ICARRD follow-up, resulting from discussions in the Special Forum on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development of the Thirty-second Session of the Committee on World Food Security.

VII. Report of the Discussion at the 131st Session of the Council

17. The Council offered its thanks and congratulations to the Government of Brazil and to the Secretariat of FAO for hosting and organizing the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD).

18. The Council recognized that FAO had a significant role in building capacities and in providing policy advice for agrarian reform and rural development at national level. It also recognized the importance of agrarian reform and rural development for achieving the goal of eradicating hunger and poverty. Many Members stressed that the FAO Reform process should not compromise FAO's role, institutional capacity and visibility in agrarian reform and rural development.

19. Concerning ICARRD follow-up, many Members supported the recommendations outlined in the Council document, while many others stated that they could not support them. These Members cautioned against the allocation of scarce resources to new mechanisms that could lead to duplication of efforts and called for reporting on a voluntary basis as a part of the Committee on World Food Security's (CFS) regular reporting mechanism, and for the avoidance of initiatives that would absorb existing, limited Regular Programme resources.

20. In light of the diversity of positions put forward, the Council agreed that further consideration was required on appropriate follow-up for ICARRD, including in relation to the proposed Special Initiative on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, platforms for dialogue, the mechanisms and guidelines for monitoring and reporting and the expansion of the database.

21. The Council endorsed the conclusion of the Thirty-second Session of the CFS that COAG, at its next Session, consider the ICARRD recommendations and submit to the CFS, if appropriate, relevant recommendations for consideration at its Thirty-third Session in 2007.

VIII. Guidance sought from COAG

22. In view of the discussions at CFS, and at the 131st session of the Council, COAG might wish to consider the ICARRD recommendations taking into account the Guidance the Secretariat sought from the 131st session of the Council as given in para 16 and submit to the CFS, if appropriate, relevant recommendations for consideration at its Thirty-third Session in 2007.