

IFAP – WORLD BANK CONSULTATIONS ON THE WORLD DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2008

IFAP held regional consultation workshops on the World Development Report 2008 with the World Bank, addressing the regional specific agricultural issues in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), Mediterranean, Africa and Asia.

IFAP regional committees noted that they value the World Development Report 2008 and its recognition of the relevance of agriculture and farmers' organizations to promote development. This report comes at a time of increased attention in the sector as all witness the rise in food prices. The cause and effects of this situation are partially due to the lack of attention that international institutions, like the World Bank, gave the sector for the past two decades.

The workshops facilitated discussion and defined the successful criteria for an agricultural sector that is capable of improving smallholders' livelihoods and guaranteeing food security in the midst of modern challenges like climate change and market volatility. First, members envisioned the ideal conditions for an agriculture sector that meets the capacities mentioned above. Secondly, they assessed the role and current work of governments and international bodies and provided recommendations, specifically to the World Bank. Third, they defined and emphasized the participatory role and impact farmers' organizations should have in policy processes and funding allocation. Finally, they defined a series of priority issues to be addressed by governments and international institutions for each region.

The kind of agriculture and development that farmers visualize and wish for their countries.

Farmers want to work towards and be supported to develop a sustainable, growth oriented, diversified, competitive and profitable agricultural sector for an equitable and sustainable economic development, being socially inclusive, enabling and protecting family agriculture. An agricultural sector capable of improving smallholders' livelihoods and guaranteeing food security at the time of facing modern challenges, while at the same time, ensuring good practices in labor, environmental and food safety.

The following table summarizes the conclusions of each IFAP regional workshop regarding the first topic. Common views spanning across each of the diverse regions is evident.

<i>Regional Committees</i>	<i>What kind of agriculture and what kind of development do farmers want to work for?</i>
Asia	A sustainable, diversified, and market-oriented agriculture addressing food security and smallholders' livelihoods, contributing towards development with equitable growth.
Africa	A growth-oriented agriculture (sustainable, competitive and profitable) for equitable agriculture-led socio-economic development that improves livelihoods in an environmentally sustainable manner.
LAC	A sustainable, competitive, profitable and socially inclusive agriculture with entrepreneur farmers. An agricultural sector with the capacity to face modern challenges (like climate change and market volatility), ensuring good practices in labor, the environment and food safety.

Mediterranean	A competitive and profitable agricultural sector, ensuring food security at the national level, maintaining and respecting family agriculture for sustainable economic development.
----------------------	---

To make the above conclusions a reality, there are certain points of action governments and international organizations and donors need to take. IFAP regional committees outlined these points, taking into account the role that they are called to play.

Roles to be played by governments and international institutions to make farmers’ views on agriculture and development possible

IFAP leaders from developing countries propose that national governments, under consultation with farmers’ organizations, should provide appropriate pro-farmer agricultural policies to enable a policy and regulatory environment that ensures the necessary investments in rural infrastructure, like electricity and water facilities, and supports production and producers. Support measures and services to farmers for ensuring agriculture modernization should include access to credit, technical assistance and tax reductions and subsidies, when needed. Special attention should be given to the strengthening of farmers’ organizations.

At the same time, farmers’ leaders call on international organizations and donors to work in partnership with governments, farmers’ organizations and the private sector to encourage and support policy dialogues. The aim is to work together on level grounds to develop conducive policies, institutional frameworks and programs that support agricultural production and farmers organizations, through investments in infrastructure and capacity building. This should be done in international coordination, under the monitoring of the parties involved.

International organizations and governments are also called upon to play a crucial role in the promotion and implementation of economic solidarity measures to enable agricultural investments like flexible access to financing, the coordination and monitoring of international trade to avoid international market distortions, and working on systems to guarantee that food security is understood as a person’s right to food.

Concerning this issue, the particular conclusions brought by each IFAP regional committee are summarized below:

<i>By Regional Committees</i>	What should governments and international organizations do to realize their goals on agriculture and development?
Asia	<p>Governments should adopt appropriate pro-farmer agricultural policies and provide the adequate regulatory environment and infrastructure. It should grant access to rural services, incentives and support (technology, credit, electricity, water, etc.), including special support and services for to strengthen of farmers’ organizations.</p> <p>International organizations should increase investments directed to strengthen farmers’ organizations, support policy dialogues and capacity building which will directly benefit the farmers.</p>
Africa	<p>National governments (and international institutions in partnership with farmers’ organizations, funding institutions and the private sector) should provide an enabling policy environment (funding policies, legal frameworks. incentives, etc.) backed by adequate resource allocation.</p> <p>In this context, international organizations should work in partnership with governments, farmers’ organizations and the private sector to put conducive policy and institutional frameworks to commit increased funding for infrastructure and farmers’ organizations.</p>

<p>LAC</p>	<p>Governments should promote and back agricultural production through policies, institutional development of norms and regulations and support measures. They must invest in infrastructure, technical assistance and credit policies.</p> <p>International organizations should work in partnership with governments, farmers' organizations and private sector when generating policies and programs, especially for the strengthening of farmers' organizations. Policies and programs must be monitored by the involved parties.</p> <p>Governments and international organizations should work towards an international trade system with more open markets and less distortions.</p>
<p>Mediterranean</p>	<p>Governments should create the necessary regulatory, legal and economic conditions, under consultation with producers organizations, to ensure direct and indirect support to production and producers to facilitate agricultural modernization (in areas like access to credit, tax reductions, subsidies when needed, support of farmers organizations, etc.).</p> <p>International organizations should interact and network among themselves and with national governments to: promote and implement economic solidarity measures (e.g. flexible access to financing); coordinate support for agricultural production and farmers' organizations; and to work on systems to guarantee peoples' right to food and the enforcement of laws regarding agriculture and food security.</p>

IFAP Regional Committees members recognize that the World Development Report 2008 generates a unique international political opportunity for dialogue on agriculture policies and to create awareness about the relevance that farmers' organizations bring to the development processes. This brings an extraordinary opportunity for farmers' organizations to dialogue with governments and international organizations to encourage them to take action. IFAP Regional Committee members are aware that governments and international organizations will not take all the needed actions spontaneously and therefore, the farmers' organizations' role becomes crucial.

The role of farmers' organizations in advocating their views on agriculture and development.

IFAP Regional Committees' leaders pointed out that, to make their goals on agriculture and development, farmers' organizations need to lobby and advocate their members' interests, networking with other sectors, governments, private sector and international organizations. Farmers' organizations should focus their efforts on strengthening their members and their own organization, so they have the capacity to properly advocate and play a role in national and international policy making processes. They pointed out the need for adequate policy and regulatory frameworks for agriculture and of capacity building programs. Farmers' organizations have the will and disposition to collaborate with other sectors and with a range of public and private actors to make this possible.

The particular roles that IFAP regional committees visualize for their members in each region are presented in the following table:

<p><i>By Regional Committees</i></p>	<p>What should farmers' organizations do to make sure that their vision on agriculture and development will happen?</p>
--------------------------------------	--

Asia	Farmers' organizations have networking, lobbying and advocating roles to play. Also, collaborating with governments, private sector and international organizations in policy making processes and strengthening their members' capacities for competitiveness and off-farm skills are also included in their mandate.
Africa	Farmers' organizations need to effectively mobilize farmers and represent them in policy processes, with the view of ensuring the successful implementation of appropriate policies and programs. They should build their capacity for proactive engagement with stakeholders on policy issues and address challenges to ensure implementation, monitoring and evaluation of priority programs.
LAC	Farmers' organizations should participate in the agricultural policy making processes and in strengthening programs for farmers and their organizations (e.g. generating alternative financing systems). All this should be done via representing their members based in their participation and in the networking with other sectors.
Mediterranean	Farmers' organizations should represent their members, ensure their unification and strength and advocate their interests at national and international levels. Their role is to raise awareness about their concerns and needs and lobby the public sector so that: farmers' organizations are involved as partners in the decision making and in policy generation processes; farmers' capacity building is enabled and reinforced (such as training, information, and technical support to develop their production); and supply chain development is facilitated for farmers to better access markets.

Main current priority issues that farmers' organizations need to address in each region, according to IFAP regional committee' members:

In light of the World Development Report 2008, IFAP farm leaders from the four Regional Committees call the World Bank to take the lead in the promotion, encouragement and support of periodical consultations at the national, regional and global level to facilitate policy dialogues and international cooperation programs. IFAP members of the regional committees are ready to engage in periodic consultations with the World Bank, governments and others relevant stakeholders to include their view of a family-based, sustainable, growth oriented, diversified, competitive and profitable agriculture sector. The main issues that the regional committees propose to the World Bank in order to start consultations and policy dialogues are as follows:

<i>By Regional Committees</i>	<i>What are the main current priority issues that farmers organizations need to address in each region, according to IFAP regional committee' members?</i>
Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investment in rural infrastructure (such as irrigation, electricity and roads). - Policies to support agriculture appropriate to the current challenges (including subsidies, research and extension) with a special focus on empowering farmers in the markets and increasing the competitiveness of smallholders. - Creation of rural jobs.

Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public and private investment for rural infrastructure, financing agriculture and human capital to improve productivity and ensure an increased food production. - Improvement of market access and value addition. - Address the access to land issue.
LAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investments in infrastructure. - Inclusive economic policies (taking into account small, medium and large agricultural producers). - Improve the access to risk capital. - Promotion, research and training on alternative technologies (agroecology) and high-tech (precision agriculture).
Mediterranean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address climate change and water issues concerning agriculture. - Have appropriate laws and regulations and application; thereof, with the involvement of farmers' organizations as partners in the processes. - Access to credit and financial means. - Market access.

Farmers are the main actors and are crucial part of the solution to the current challenges in the economic, social and environmental spheres. However, they need a conducive policy and regulatory environment, infrastructure, access to finance, technology, and more.

It is time now for the World Bank to seriously consider the recommendations of the World Development Report 2008. IFAP regional committees call the World Bank to establish consultation mechanisms so farmers' organizations can bring forth their concerns and proposed solutions.