



## Western and Central Africa Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre



### Regional workshop on community-driven development 14-17 March 2006 New Coco Beach Resort - Accra, Ghana

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#### **Introductory Remarks**

#### **[Check against delivery]**

Honourable Minister,  
Distinguished Secretary-Generals of MOFA and MLGRD  
Representatives of international organizations and development agencies,  
Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Good morning.

On behalf of IFAD and of all the organizers, I have the pleasure of welcoming you to the regional workshop on community-driven development (CDD).

First of all, on behalf of IFAD's management and of the Director for Western and Central Africa Division, Mr Béavogui, I would like to thank the Government of Ghana for cosponsoring this workshop. I would like to pay tribute to the Ministry for Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) for their important contribution to the organization of this event.

This is the second workshop that IFAD organizes on this topic. The first one, which took place in 2004, followed the review of five IFAD-funded projects in Western and Central Africa. Its goal was to develop a better understanding of CDD approaches based on experience to date, and to develop a common vision.

In the months preceding our meeting here in Ghana, IFAD also moderated an electronic conference on community-driven development. The discussions held during the electronic conference allowed to define the topics that we will be proposing in the coming days.

As was the case during the e-conference, all continents are represented here, the goal being to share and learn as much as possible about the various types of CDD approaches and the diversity of contexts that exist. Through our discussions, we will travel from Cape Verde to Mauritania, crossing Latin America and Asia.

We have participants of high caliber and with very diverse functions. Among us are government representatives, staff from international development agencies, project managers, practitioners, representatives of farmers' organizations, researchers and consultants... They represent centuries of development experience and commitment. All experts here present have contributed to shaping the thinking and the making of development.



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Coming back to this week's theme... Why talk about community-driven development? One could think that all was already said, that the topic isn't new... Well, that's not the case. Community-driven development is a change in the approach to development, which positions communities as leaders, creators and managers of their own development. Those who decide of their own development, and in some way, of their destiny...

When you think about it, it's a small revolution. From beneficiaries, they become decision-makers. From people who receive, they become people who demand – and who have the means to demand.

Obviously the reality is more complex. It is even extremely complex.

We are here, in Ghana, for a reason. Ghana has a successful experience in decentralization and in community-driven development, with various leading CDD operations. Thanks to activities such as the Community-based rural development project (CBRDP) and Northern Region rural poverty reduction programme (NORPREP), IFAD was able to learn and evolve.

When putting into practice the CDD approach, all sorts of problems emerge in terms of financial management, political and institutional problems and power struggles. It is precisely for this reason that we are meeting this week, to identify and define potential pitfalls. Obviously we will not find a unique solution to each and every one of them, but the analysis of these difficulties will provide us with better chances to avoid them in the future

The workshop has four main objectives:

1. The first, probably the most important, is to exchange our experiences and to learn from others. Too often, we work in isolation when we could make faster progress if we shared our knowledge. There is a saying, attributed to Africans, that says: knowledge, like love, is one of those things that grows when we share it. It's a wonderful paradox!
2. The second objective of this workshop aims at clarifying issues which are still unclear in the community-driven development approach. There are many questions which we still need to respond to and we will try to find at least elements to provide answers and at the same time identify the key questions for future research.
3. The third objective is to establish guidelines for the design and implementation of community-driven development projects. For instance, all contexts are not appropriate for this type of approach. When and for what purpose should we use this approach? Which are the elements underlying this decision?
4. Finally, the fourth objective is to see whether we can conceive together a space to share knowledge on the topic of community-driven development



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To conclude, I would like to express a wish for this workshop. We have come here to exchange on an equal footing. Our discussion will not have value-added if these exchanges are not sincere and reflect not only the success but also the failures of our activities. The shortest way to learn remains that of learning of the mistakes of others!

I would like to ask you to take off your institutional hats and to speak openly about what works and what does not work. Each one of the organizations for whom we work has its strengths and weaknesses and its own culture, which makes them unique.

If we want to work together, what we need is trust. And trust is built on honesty.

Thank you.