



**IFAD's Statement  
ILC's Latin America Regional Meeting  
14 – 20 October, 2007  
Granada, Nicaragua**

IFAD would like to add its voice of support to your deliberations. As an active member of the Coalition we endorse the efforts being made to strengthen the linkages between members at a regional level. We believe this is an important initiative for strengthening the ILC as a member-led Coalition.

IFAD believes that equitable access to land and security of land rights for poor rural women and men are central to rural poverty reduction and we believe that civil society and inter-governmental organisations have a vital role to play in ensuring equitable access and secure land rights.

In Latin America IFAD has supported the demarcation of ancestral lands, land purchase schemes, land titling and land rehabilitation programmes. Even projects not dealing directly with land tenure issue often include specific interventions on land in order to ensure the successful implementation of other project activities.

One of the most important challenges today in the Region is to find and develop new and effective ways to ensure equitable and secure access to land for the rural poor.

While we believe equitable access and security of land rights are essential, we also believe that other inputs such as access to markets, rural finance, new technologies, appropriate government services, etc, are equally important for rural poverty reduction. Hence we believe that activities aimed at improving access and security of rights should be well-integrated into national rural poverty reduction strategies and programmes.

We believe that governments should play a leading role in rural poverty reduction and in ensuring that all citizens, in particular poor rural women and men, have equitable access to land and security of land rights; civil society and inter governmental organisations equally have important roles to play.

For this reason we have worked with many members and partners of the Coalition in Latin America and we will continue to do so. Our involvement in and support for the

Andean Forum is one example of our commitment in strengthening regional-level networks.

We recognise that there is a huge diversity in civil society organisations that can contribute in a variety of ways. Roles can range from direct support for the implementation of government policies to research, public consultation and information dissemination that can inform the formulation and implementation of policies to advocacy in defending the rights of poor and marginalised groupings to social mobilisation in opposition to elitist policies.

We believe that all these roles can be legitimate, depending on the circumstances. We believe that the building of networks and linkages between CSOs is important and that networks should be as inclusive as possible and respect the diversity of roles that can be played.

Ultimately the challenge for all CSOs should be the strengthening of the voice of ordinary people and especially poor rural women and men locally, nationally and internationally.

International Development Agencies, solidarity organisations and inter-governmental organisation can also play a positive role in promoting equitable access to land and secure land rights, including supporting the role of CSOs in land and agrarian reform processes. However, international organisations need to be careful that we do not prescribe solutions to organisations that represent people at the grass-roots level.

We must be equally respectful of the specific ways in which governments decide to address land issues according to the local and national circumstances.

IFAD believes that building partnerships between government and CSOs is essential for the formulation and implementation of pro-poor land and agrarian policies. We believe that the challenge for the future lies in the implementation of pro-poor land and agrarian policies. It is not sufficient for governments to have good policies. The real challenge lies in their implementation. Here again we think that CSOs can play a critical role in the piloting and scaling-up of pro-poor policies, in monitoring implementation and in defending the rights of the rural poor, women and marginalised groups.

In conclusion, IFAD believes that building linkages at national and international levels is important for strengthening the role of CSOs and in raising the importance of equitable access and security of land rights for rural poverty reduction.

All of us have recognised the importance of strengthening regional networks and the role of members within the Coalition and this meeting is testament to all of our efforts to do this.

We would like to wish all of you the best of luck and strength in your efforts to building a stronger Coalition and in finding effective solutions for rural poor women and men.

We look forward to continue being part of this process.

Thank you.

