

INTERNATIONAL LAND COALITION

Assembly of Members

Rome, Italy
Palazzo dei Congressi
17-18 February 2003

Minutes of the Assembly

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INTRODUCTION

The 2003 biennial meeting of the Assembly of Members of the International Land Coalition marked the transition in the governance of the Coalition from the Interim Steering Committee to a representative structure vesting decisions in a wider membership. From its inception, the Coalition has been guided by the Interim Steering Committee delegated with this responsibility by the founding Conference on Hunger and Poverty in November 1995.

The interim period focused on operationalising practical Coalition activities and projects as the basis for testing its role and value added. This period aimed to confirm the niche of the Coalition and to determine the level and commitments of its potentially wider voting membership. The early years have affirmed the value being achieved and the potential for wider and deeper achievements in the future.

Accordingly, the Assembly of Members had four primary objectives, which as stipulated in the Coalition's "Governance and Operational Framework" (Annex 1), were to:

- undertake a review, by the members and partners, of the progress achieved;
- formally establish the governance structure involving both the appointment of Members and the election of the Coalition Council ;
- receive recommendations from the members on the draft Strategic Plan for 2004-2006 as input for its finalisation by the Coalition Council; and,
- provide the members with the opportunity to advise on the Work Plan and Budget.

The Assembly of Members official business meeting on 17 February 2003 was part of a two-day programme (pages 1-9) The second day was a seminar to exchange lessons learned and ways of working together as a Coalition. The proceedings of this seminar, titled "Working Together Works" form the second part of this overall report (pages 10-22).

OPENING SESSION

The meeting was opened by Lennart Båge, President of IFAD; Phrang Roy, Assistant President, External Affairs Department, IFAD; and Manuel Chiriboga, presently Vice-Minister of Policies and Investments, Ministry of Agriculture, Republic of Ecuador and formerly the Executive Director of Asociacion Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Promocion (ALOP is founding member of the Coalition).

In welcoming the Members of the Assembly, Lennart Bage, President of IFAD, highlighted that the meeting was an occasion for charting the next steps in the life of the Coalition. He expressed his pleasure at the diversity of participants, who included representatives of the three Rome-based United Nations food agencies, civil society from all regions of the world, the European Commission, the World Bank and governments, such as the Netherlands. In addition, he encouraged the participants to continue as guests at the Governing Council of IFAD, particularly to the interactive panel on "Achieving the Millennium Development Goals by Enabling the Rural Poor to Overcome Their Poverty". He assured the Assembly of IFAD's continued support to the Coalition. For the text of President Båge speech see Annex 2.

In their opening comments Phrang Roy and Manuel Chiriboga reviewed the innovative ideas that the Coalition had introduced based on the vision of an alliance of multilateral organizations, governments, NGOs, peasant organizations, women's organizations and other stakeholders working together and learning from the different missions, perspectives and experiences of each other. They also highlighted how this collaborative process required flexibility and openness, and that, in addressing the agenda items, the meeting needed to demonstrate these two characteristics.

The agenda, as approved by the delegates, is presented in Annex 3. The list of delegates appears as Annex 4.

PROGRESS REPORT

PRESENTATION BY THE SECRETARIAT

Bruce Moore, Coordinator of the Coalition, presented the progress report of the Coalition. He began by discussing the change of name from the Popular Coalition to Eradicate Hunger and Poverty to the International Land Coalition, explaining how the change captured the transformation that had taken place in the Coalition over the past seven years: "international" articulates the nature of the Coalition; "land" expresses its focus; and "coalition" describes its form as an alliance of organizations.

He discussed each of the six programmes: The Knowledge Programme; the Network Support Programme; the Community Empowerment Facility; the Women's Resource Access Programme; Towards a Common Platform on Access to Land; and LAND Partnerships. The report emphasized that the Coalition is more than the sum of its programmes. A growing number of CSOs, governments, intergovernmental partners and individuals have come to see and express real value in the role played by the Coalition in creating opportunities for influence and involvement in land policy formulation and practical community programmes. The full text of the Progress Report is presented as Annex 5.

DISCUSSION AND ADVICE FROM THE MEMBERS

A robust discussion of the progress report brought forward the following advice from the members:

- the mandate and challenge to keep the land issue on international and national agendas must continue as a top priority. The aim should be an international protocol involving government commitments. Without such a formal protocol, there is a risk that much could be lost, given the history of changes in development trends and funding;
- a rights-based approach should be reaffirmed in the work of the Coalition. It should strengthen its pro-poor advocacy on access to land, water and related productive assets in other arenas, forums and agreements in relation to various inter-connected development issues including the right to food;
- concrete indicators are needed for measuring impact. Are the poor getting less poor as a result of the actions of the Coalition? If yes, how? ;
- pastoralist and nomadic peoples need to be identified in the sub-groupings used by the Coalition to disaggregate the rural poor; and,
- codes of conduct governing rights of access to resources by transnational corporations and extractive industries are required in order to provide a framework for managing and reconciling resource conflicts. The Coalition

needs to determine if this is work for which it may have a comparative advantage.

GOVERNANCE

The founding conference appointed an Interim Steering Committee to ensure a broad base of partner's input and oversight in the formative period of the Coalition. The vision from the Conference, subsequently expressed in the Governance Framework (Annex 1), was for a broader voting membership and a Coalition Council to provide governance on behalf of the membership to the policies, programme of work and budget and conduct of the secretariat. To make the transition from the Interim Steering Committee to the Coalition Council, the committee used the authority provided by the founding conference to appoint a slate of members, meaning those granted with voting rights. The duties of members are listed in the Governance Framework.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS

Based on consultation prior to the Assembly of Members, the Interim Steering Committee appointed the following organizations as members of the Coalition on:

South Asia

- Social Development Foundation (SDF),
- India Institute for Motivating Self-Employment (IMSE), India
- Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD), Bangladesh
- Mobilization and Development (MODE), Nepal

East Asia and the Pacific

- Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC), Cambodia
- Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria (KPA), Indonesia
- The Indonesian Institute for Forest and Environment (RMI), Indonesia
- Asian NGO Coalition (ANGOC), The Philippines

Africa

- National Land Committee (NLC), South Africa
- The Uganda Land Alliance, Uganda
- Zimbabwe Environmental Research Organization (ZERO), Zimbabwe

Latin America and the Caribbean

- Fundación Tierra, Bolivia
- Asociación Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Promoción (ALOP), Costa Rica
- Program Estudios para el Desarrollo Rural, Coordinación de ONG y Cooperativas (CONGCOOP), Guatemala
- Asociación de Organizaciones Campesinas Centroamericanas para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo (ASOCODE), Honduras
- Federación Nacional de Cooperativas Agropecuarias y Agroindustriales (FENACOO), Nicaragua
- Consejo Coordinador de Organizaciones Campesinas de Honduras (COCOCH), Honduras
- ALLPA (meaning "land" in Quecha), Peru
- Fondo Ecuatoriano Populorum Progressio (FEPP), Ecuador

- Centro Peruano de Estudios Sociales (CEPES), Peru
- Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development (CNIRD), Trinidad and Tobago

OECD Countries

- Deutsche Welthungerhilfe, Germany
- Bread for the World Institute, United States
- Secours Populaire Français, France

Global CSOs

- International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), Paris

Intergovernmental and Governmental Organizations

- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Rome
- European Commission, Brussels
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Rome
- World Bank, Washington, D.C.
- World Food Programme (WFP), Rome
- Inter-American Development Bank (IaDB), Washington, D.C.

ESTABLISHING THE COALITION COUNCIL

The newly appointed members were then requested to establish the Coalition Council. Eight of the 14 members of the Council are elected, on a rotational basis, from and by the civil-society members. Seven of the eight positions were filled with one vacancy left open for the Coalition Council to appoint a second African organisation. The seven elected organisations are:

- Social Development Foundation (SDF), India
- Asian NGO Coalition (ANGOC), Philippines
- Fundación TIERRA, Bolivia
- Asociación de Organizaciones Campesinas Centroamericanas para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo (ASOCODE), Honduras
- The Uganda Land Alliance, Uganda (ULA)
- Deutsche Welthungerhilfe, Germany
- International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), Paris

The six intergovernmental organisations are semi-permanent. Five of the six positions were affirmed with one vacancy to be filled by the Coalition Council. The five are:

- International Fund for Agricultural Development (permanent - as host)
- European Commission, Brussels
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Rome
- World Bank, Washington, D.C.
- World Food Programme (WFP), Rome

The meeting invited the members to propose candidate organisations to the Council for the civil-society and the intergovernmental vacancies.

STRATEGIC PLAN - 2004-2006

The Secretariat, Richard Trenchard and Annalisa Mauro, presented the draft Strategic Plan for 2004-2006, which had been distributed to all participants in advance of the Assembly. The secretariat explained that the discussion with the members is to provide input and guidance to the Coalition Council when it meets later in 2003 to finalise the plan. At this stage, it is important to focus on: (i) the environment in which the Coalition operates as well as the Coalition's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT); and (ii) reflections on key objectives and strategic thrusts. It was noted that the Strategic Plan has evolved over several years based on a number of meetings with Coalition delegates in various venues around the world. It is based on the responsive approach taken in testing the niche of the Coalition in the post-conference period leading to the need to now establish a more strategic direction that will drive the annual programme of work and budget.

THE MISSION

Mr Trenchard presented the Mission Statement explaining how it has been shaped in reflection of the challenges that comprise the land agenda; inter-alia: the links between poverty and food insecurity on the one hand, and access to natural resources and tenure security on the other; the negative impact on rural livelihoods when the effects of globalization are not moderated in the interests of the poor; growing resource competition; and the dominant economic and political interests that so often work against the interests of the rural poor. It was noted that there is a wide gap between recognising the critical importance of land access and including land issues in poverty reduction strategies and programmes. The poor continue to be excluded socially, economically and politically.

THE SWOT ANALYSIS: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

The draft Strategic Plan highlights the SWOT as:

Strengths – strong partnership; five years of concrete experience; potential to deliver impact in multiple settings, contexts and levels; capacity to create new spaces and opportunities; a feedback mechanism through the membership structure; ability to provide the rural poor with voice, visibility, opportunity and influence; ability to bring about new forms of collaboration between stakeholders; and potential to channel new knowledge and understanding about what works and what doesn't work.

Weaknesses – insufficient resources to meet expectations in terms of programmes, activities and Secretariat functions; weak communications capacity has limited the promotion of the Coalition's achievements and restricted the overall sense of ownership; the innovative nature of the Coalition's work has often made it difficult to produce straightforward concrete results; and uncertainty about the neutrality of the Coalition (is there a bias in the interests it represents?) among different sub-groups of partners.

Opportunities – growing recognition of the capacity to work with civil society; increasing support and concrete interest by a number of intergovernmental partners; a growing invitation to collaborate with the Coalition; interest in how its approaches can be incorporated into the programmes of other development actors; increasing involvement in a range of global processes and events; and emerging support for the

LAND partnership approach.

Threats – continuing misconceptions and negative stereotypes about the nature and meaning of land issues; widening interest in land issues creates growing competition; conventional project-based approaches still predominate; and governments and donors continue to equate secure land access with land administration.

DISCUSSION AND ADVICE FROM THE MEMBERS

The plenary discussion produced the following advice:

- situate the plan in the context of sustainable development;
- refer to poor men and women and not just to the rural poor;
- focus on both ownership and security of tenure;
- emphasize the disparities in women's access to, benefit from and use of land and strengthen linkages with women's organizations and other organizations that work on gender issues;
- become more location-specific so as to understand how property systems are being transformed by the modernization / globalisation of agriculture and agro-industries, which are enormous consumers of land;
- incorporate the issues of sectoral competition for land including housing, tourism / recreation; extractive industries and the effects of sectoral influences on rights of access by the poor;
- balance the issues of access to land with access to the factors to use land to earn a livelihood;
- clarify / alter the term environmental assessment to ensure attention is focused on the social, economic and political factors that comprise the working environment / framework wherein the required changes must be made and the constraints overcome;
- ensure the strategic thrusts are effectively targeted by analyzing the different occupational groups that constitute the rural poor. For example, in many localities the agricultural work force may be predominantly wage earners and not farmers;
- give greater attention (in this 3 year period) to building a financially secure base for the operations of the Coalition;
- underscore the Coalition goal and role as a think-tank and knowledge node for lessons learned in the field, on action-research and through studies and reports produced by partner organisations;
- conflict resolution needs a distinctive place in the plan; including among others, conflicts involving populations that are consistently marginalized, such as pastoralists and indigenous peoples;
- link access to land to a rights-based approach to development;
- take affirmative action to embrace social movements, research centres and think tanks; and,
- place attention on areas where there are gaps; such as
 - community approaches to securing land rights;
 - policies in support of women's access to land;
 - more understanding of market and non-market issues;
 - regional attention vis a vis Eastern Europe and the Middle East; and,
 - agriculture workers.

OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIC THRUSTS and PRIORITY AREAS

Ms. Mauro noted that the four major objectives described in the Plan are to:

- contribute to rural poverty reduction by supporting community-based and other practical projects;
- improve understanding and action in order to help create the enabling policies and programmes that can overcome the systemic constraints and practical obstacles that prevent the poor from gaining secure access to land and related resources;
- build active partnerships and alliances in order to capture and channel potential synergies, resources and spheres of influence into well targeted and jointly supported projects; and,
- strengthen the capacity of Coalition members, in particular its civil-society partners, and the communities they serve.

Six strategic thrusts are identified as the nucleus of the Coalition's activities under the draft plan for the three years:

1. Sharing knowledge on lessons learnt and best practices;
2. Building networks for collective empowerment;
3. Creating new and innovative spaces for dialogue and negotiation between diverse stakeholders;
4. Engaging in advocacy at national and international levels;
5. Demonstrating and integrating civil-society approaches into policies and programmes; and,
6. Building country-level coalitions to become an authentic decentralized mechanism.

The draft Plan identifies six areas for priority attention:

1. Governance - to strengthen participatory decision-making and ownership;
2. Communication – to raise awareness, expand membership and increase influence by dissemination and advocacy that is based on lessons learned;
3. Resource Mobilization – to match opportunities and demands with the financing required for action;
4. Priority Countries – to build critical mass in selected countries as focal points to demonstrate potential for national level impact;
5. Monitoring and Evaluation – to objectively learn from experience in order to increase the capacity of the Coalition and its partners; and,
6. Secretariat Capacity – to provide a secure and competent foundation for future Coalition operations.

DISCUSSION AND ADVICE FROM THE MEMBERS

The plenary discussion produced the following advice:

- focus at the country-level. The value of the Coalition will be judged by measurable progress at national and local levels;
- retain clear linkages to the Millennium Development Goals so that the plan is situated in the broader context and tied to larger efforts that can provide leverage;
- retain the relationship of land to hunger – it is an essential manifestation of poverty upon which the Coalition was established;

- clarify how the objectives, thrusts and priorities relate to the SWOT analysis;
- distinguish more fully between the strategic objectives, thrusts and priorities and divide into two groups - internal and external
- priority areas may be thought of in terms of: (i) a rights approach to access to land, with links to the right to food; (ii) a code of conduct for secure access to land, including forms of access and ownership; (iii) access to complementary resources to make land productive with links to financial sources; (iv) identification of a research agenda for joint undertaking with research centers; (v) advocacy; (vi) monitoring indicators; and (vii) training in conflict resolution; and,
- make the Coalition's comparative advantage – its unique assets and contributions – more apparent.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK AND BUDGET

The Programme of Work and Budget for 2003 had been distributed to participants before the Assembly, and during the Assembly a financial summary of the results since 1996 was presented. The Coalition Council has responsibility for approving and monitoring the annual work programme and budget. The Assembly sanctioned the information provided and gave overall support to the direction being taken.

CLOSING THE ASSEMBLY

Mr Roy thanked the Assembly for the rich discussion and expressed his encouragement by the very constructive input the members provided to the refinement of the draft Strategic Plan, particularly the need to take a rights-based approach and to focus on livelihood security for the poor. He also reiterated the need for the Coalition to strengthen its resources position. He noted the benefits from linkages with research centres and the potential for the Coalition to become a centre of excellence, which shares the local expertise of community-based approaches with others around the world. He noted the strong level of concern marginalized groups including the special attention that needs to be given to women. He closed by expressing IFAD's solid support for the Coalition.