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United Nations Public-Private Alliance for Rural Development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Economic and Social Council's Ministerial Declaration in 2003 highlighted the importance of promoting partnerships amongst stakeholders in support of the aims of rural development. In response, and in accordance with Council resolutions 2004/49 and 2005/42, the United Nations Public-Private Alliance for Rural Development was created as an *ad hoc* initiative of the Council to help further these aims, with Madagascar and the Dominican Republic as the first two pilot countries of the Alliance. The first report of the Alliance (E/2007/61) was considered by the Council at its substantive session in 2007.

The present report has been prepared in response to Council resolution 2007/36 which requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its 2009 substantive session. Resolution 2007/36, *inter alia*, also welcomed Angola and Ethiopia as the third and fourth pilot countries in the Alliance. The present report provides an update of the activities undertaken in the first two pilot countries since the last report and provides examples of activities carried out by stakeholders in support of rural development in the two new pilot countries.

* E/2009/100.

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I. Introduction

A. Background

1. The present report has been prepared in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2007/36 on the United Nations Public-Private Alliance for Rural Development, which requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council at its substantive session in 2009 on the implementation of the work of the Alliance.

2. The United Nations Public-Private Alliance for Rural Development (UNPPA) was created following the outcome of the Council's high-level segment in 2003, which considered the theme "Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development". The Ministerial Declaration¹ adopted at the Council's 2003 session highlighted the importance of alliances amongst all stakeholders for the promotion and achievement of rural development, considered as key to reducing poverty and achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

3. The key aims of the Alliance are primarily threefold: (a) to work as a catalyst and facilitator for the promotion of partnerships between all stakeholders in support of rural development; (b) to provide a platform for collaboration; and (c) to highlight the results of these efforts by stakeholders by bringing them to the attention of the international community through the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

4. By its resolutions 2004/49 and 2005/42, the Council approved Madagascar and the Dominican Republic as the first and second pilot countries of the Alliance. In those resolutions, Member States, the funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions, civil society, the private sector, as well as other relevant stakeholders, were invited to support the programmes and activities of the Alliance in its goal of promoting sustainable rural development. In its resolution 2007/36, Angola and Ethiopia were welcomed as the third and fourth pilot countries into the Alliance.

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, 58th Session, supp.#3 (A/58/3/Rev.1), Chap. III, para. 35*

5. This report updates activities in support of strengthening public-private partnerships in the first two pilot countries as outlined in the previous report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Public-Private alliance for rural Development². It also provides examples of stakeholder initiatives in the two new pilot countries, Angola and Ethiopia³. Also included is a section on activities undertaken at United Nations Headquarters in New York in support of the pilot countries. The report will also examine the impact of the current financial and economic crisis on efforts to achieve rural development in the four pilot countries. The concluding section of the report will propose recommendations for strengthening the activities of the Alliance.

B. Importance of rural development

6. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) represent a global strategic partnership formulated to respond to the world's main development challenges, in particular to halve extreme poverty and hunger by 2015. As three out of every four poor people in developing countries- over 1 billion of them- live in rural areas, the promotion of rural development, is essential to reducing poverty and for promoting better standards of living for much of the world's population and meeting the MDG goals. This requires broad-based investments in rural areas that benefit entire communities, and not only those engaged in agricultural activities.

7. Agricultural development alone will not be enough to drastically reduce poverty. However, it has proven to be uniquely powerful in helping to achieve this goal. Historically, improvements to this vital sector have been the foundation for overall economic development and poverty reduction. In most developing countries agriculture is the largest employer, job creator and export earner. An increase in agricultural productivity contributes significantly to poverty reduction, especially in rural areas. A study of 58 developing countries found that a 10 per cent increase in agricultural

² E/2007/61

³ See annex for list of stakeholders that provided inputs to the present report

productivity was associated with as much as a 6 per cent reduction in the proportion of people living under one dollar a day⁴.

8. Rural infrastructure and support services play a key role in promoting rural development, specifically in the enhancement of agricultural production. They affect the quality, quantity, diversity, affordability, distribution, and stability of food supply from rural areas. Provision of roads, transport, water and irrigation, power and telecommunications are important elements of rural infrastructure essential for rural transformation.

9. The improvement of access to water resources and improved sanitation are important both for healthy livelihoods of rural populations and for agricultural production. Restricted access to safe drinking water and inadequate sanitation are root causes of many diseases that affect rural people in developing countries, reducing their capacity for productive work and thus diminishing their chances of escaping from poverty. In addition, in the past decade, there have been growing disparities in access to health care with the majority of the poor, especially in rural areas, being left out of the market. Furthermore, unanticipated medical expenditure is the second highest cause of rural indebtedness.

10. In order for rural development policies and programmes to succeed, it is crucial that they ensure that the most vulnerable people are protected. Achieving gender equality is crucial for accelerating sustainable rural development, especially since women make up a considerable majority of the agricultural workforce. It has been estimated that rural women produce more than half of the food grown in the world, provide up to 90 per cent of labour in rice cultivation and play a key role in non-farm ancillary services, such as sale of produce. Providing safety nets for them is vital to maintain both agricultural production systems and the rural family structure.

11. Rural development should be mainstreamed in national development frameworks and poverty reduction strategies. Policy decisions to advance rural development must be

⁴ E/2008/68- Theme of the 2008 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council: Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development, taking into account current challenges: Report of the Secretary-General

participatory and involve all stakeholders in their implementation. Ensuring that the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard may significantly assist in the successful implementation of such policies.

12. Commitment to investment in agricultural and productivity improvement should be maintained to hasten the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. Evidence shows that agricultural growth promotes rural and non-farm employment and has a considerable poverty-reducing effect.

C. Promotion of partnerships for rural development and achieving the MDGs

13. As stressed in the previous section, poverty and hunger reduction targets will not be met unless poverty in rural areas decreases. No single agency or organization can single-handedly successfully tackle all of the challenges associated with rural development, nor act alone as the advocate for its advancement. Consequently, partnerships are vital in order to tackle rural development and ultimately achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

14. This was emphasized by the Council in its 2003 Ministerial Declaration, in which it outlined essential requirements to be met in pursuing these aims in developing countries. A crucial requisite in the promotion of an integrated approach to rural development was that partnerships at the national and international levels to foster collaboration among actors in different sectors would play a critical role.

15. The Declaration has contributed to raising awareness regarding the importance of agricultural and rural development in furthering the development agenda, in particular with respect to combating the twin scourges of poverty and hunger. Various development partners have embarked on an initiative to bring together and improve the harmonization of their activities. Several examples of these partnership initiatives in the Alliance's four pilot countries will be outlined in the next part of this report.

16. Jointly preparing and implementing national rural strategies in recipient countries is an effective way to foster mutual learning and information exchange that is required to ensure maximum development impact. Of crucial importance is the incorporation of the rural poor in all facets of the strategic development framework.

17. The dilemma of tackling rural poverty reduction is greater today than it was in 2003. Old challenges persist while there are new threats to push the rural poor ever deeper into poverty. The increase in global food prices impacting directly on the poorest, especially the landless rural population, indicates an increasing urgency to improve conditions in agriculture and in rural areas. Simultaneously, the effects of climate change are undermining agricultural production, in particular in the more marginal areas where a large proportion of the rural poor live.

18. In order to increase the number of resources committed to rural development as well as to achieve development impact in rural areas, global partnerships need to share lessons of experience including best practices, build local capacity and enhance global advocacy for rural poverty reduction.

D. The impact and challenges of current crises on rural development

19. The scale and reach of the current financial crisis poses the threat of a rapidly deteriorating outlook for the world economy, which is expected to contract by about 2.0 per cent in 2009. Growth in emerging and developing countries is expected to slow from 6.25 per cent in 2008 to 3.25 per cent in 2009 owing to falling export demand and financing, lower commodity prices, and much tighter external financing constraints⁵. The crisis has already seriously set back the development efforts of many poorer countries and increased the magnitude of the challenges faced.

20. Amid this grim prognosis, an overriding concern of the international community is the grim situation now being faced with regard to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. Most developing countries' efforts to

⁵ World Economic Outlook, *Update*, 28 January 2009

achieve the MDGs benefited from the improved economic growth and relatively low inflation that characterized the first years of this millennium. However, with the downturn in the global economy, the gains achieved in the past decade are likely to dissipate and in some instances this reversal has already begun. New estimates by the World Bank suggest that 46 million more people will fall below \$1.25-a-day poverty line and an extra 53 million people will be forced to live on less than \$2 a day, compared to those made before the onset of the crisis⁶.

21. The global financial crisis comes on top of the food and energy crises in 2008, which already pushed 130-155 million people into poverty between late 2005 and early 2008. Higher food prices added 115 million hungry people in 2007 and 2008, raising the total to close to 1 billion people⁷. Rising food prices have also threatened the limited gains in alleviating child malnutrition. By 2006, the number of children in developing countries who were underweight exceeded 140 million, and it is now predicted that this global situation will be exacerbated by higher food prices. The Secretary-General's High Level Task Force on Global Food Security has highlighted the need for increased investment in the agricultural sector to address some of the structural issues related to food security.

22. Climate change is an additional challenge as it modifies the physical and socio-economic conditions within which life occurs. Agricultural production is expected to fall in tropical and most temperate regions as a consequence of climate variability and uncertain growing-season length, decreased water availability, new patterns exhibited by pests and diseases and a loss of biodiversity. It is the poorest and most vulnerable people in rural areas that are expected to be hit the hardest. Increases in temperature will reduce not only the yields of most crops, but additionally the area of land that is available for crop growth. Furthermore, occurrences of drought and heavy flooding are likely to become more frequent and severe.

⁶ World Bank, "Crisis Hitting Poor hard in Developing World", Press Release No. 2009/220/EXC, Washington D.C, 12 February 2009

⁷ FAO, 2008

23. Given the limited institutional and financial capacities at the local level, the challenges posed by climate change will impact on poverty, hunger and health conditions of rural communities. The living conditions of poor rural households and farmers who depend on natural resources and subsistence agriculture risk further deterioration.

II. Activities in support of rural development in the four pilot countries

A. Madagascar

(i) Overview

24. With 80% of the country's population living in rural areas and most living below the poverty line, Madagascar's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries (MAEP) in 2004 developed a five year Master Plan for Rural Development that focuses on sustained market-oriented business to develop the country's rural economy in an effort to significantly reduce rural poverty. Extensive services to strengthen agribusiness were introduced, including expanding market information systems, cooperative business formation, and creating rural child nutrition programmes.

25. The country has also integrated rural development and a green revolution as part of its Madagascar Action Plan (MAP), the second generation poverty reduction strategy for the period 2007-2012. Within this plan, the government aims to secure land tenure, improve access to affordable rural financing, launch a sustainable green revolution, promote market oriented activities, diversify rural activities, and increase the agricultural value added and promote agri-business. The Government has also been striving to establish an agri-business centre in every region of the country to train and assist rural farmers and create better roads and communications to facilitate greater entrepreneurial and private sector involvement.

26. Globally, Madagascar is one of the richest nations in terms of biodiversity. But the country faces high levels of environmental stress caused by severe poverty among its

people. A cycle of environmental degradation and poverty is created where agricultural needs lead to poor management of resources (i.e. forest loss, soil erosion, decreasing water availability), which in turn leads to increased poverty and a greater need for agricultural expansion. One of MAP's key goals is also to protect the environment by developing industry around the environment, such as eco-tourism, sustainable farming practices, and expanding the market for organic and natural products. The Government's commitment to advancing rural agriculture through these types of national programmes aims to lift its people out of poverty through achievement of the MDG's by 2015. However, the political crisis since January 2009 has had a negative impact on development efforts.

(ii) Activities by UN agencies/organizations

27. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has, in recent years, placed greater emphasis on the importance of private sector development as it provides most income-generating activities and job-creation opportunities and is increasingly becoming the driving force for economic growth and poverty reduction. IFAD's Executive Board has adopted a Private Sector Development Strategy that identifies the key elements of the institution's engagement with the private sector. Based on this strategy, IFAD supports local and private sector development through both policy dialogue and investment operations. It also partners with the private sector to leverage additional resource flows to rural areas.

28. IFAD supports the Malagasy Government's efforts to promote growth in the agricultural sector and the development of agro-based industry through four rural projects:

(a) a Rural Income Promotion Programme (PPRR) which aims to increase incomes and enhance food security of the people living in one of the country's poorest provinces.

(b) an Upper Mandraré Basin Development Project – Phase II (PHBM), which was completed in 2008, and has aimed at boosting food production in part of the dry region of the far south and helping to strengthen the food security of rural inhabitants and improve their living conditions;

(c) a Support Programme for the Rural Micro enterprise Poles and Regional Economies (PROSPERER) which it implemented in May 2008 and which supports collaboration with the private sector through micro and small enterprises, value chains and professional organizations; and

(d) a Support to Farmers' Professional Organizations and Agricultural Services Project (AROPA) that was approved in 2008 and came into effect in January 2009. The overall objective of the project is to strengthen farmers' organizations to improve agricultural incomes and reduce vulnerability of small producers (especially the poorest among them) by facilitating their access to a range of services and appropriate technology.

29. The World Bank's implementation of its Agricultural Extension Programme Support Project in Madagascar has resulted in a partnership system between the project executing agency and other entities in the public sector, communes, non-governmental organizations and the private sector that have capacities for technology transfer and training. Its Rural Development Support Project seeks to promote the identification of poverty reducing, income generating rural development programmes through greater participation of the private sector and non-governmental organizations. Various International Finance Corporation funded projects in the country also envisage greater scope for private sector involvement.

30. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has carried out a project financed by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) aimed at operationalizing pro-poor growth in two of the country's rural communities. Under-privileged families were trained to identify potential economic opportunities in their communities and then worked together with enterprises to develop local employment. ILO training methodologies included Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) and Value Chain Analysis and Upgrading (VCAU). VCAU enabled stakeholders from the local communities, the region and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry to examine another export-oriented sector-embroidery-with a view to identifying ways to improve quality and stimulate employment.

31. Following the advocacy efforts undertaken by the Permanent Mission of Madagascar in New York and the United Nations Public-Private Alliance for Rural Development, the first Millennium Village of Madagascar, in the rural commune of Sambaina, Madagascar, was established with funding from the South Korean Government. The African Millennium Villages, promoted by the Millennium Project and the Earth Institute of Columbia University, offer a scalable model for fighting poverty at the village level and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The Millennium Village initiative works directly with the respective communities, non-governmental organizations and national governments to show how rural African communities can lift themselves out of poverty and achieve the Goals if they have access to proven and powerful technologies that can enhance their farm productivity, health, education, and access to markets — while operating within the budget constraints established by international agreements for official development assistance.

32. The Sambaina Millennium Village is currently implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with the Government of Madagascar. For the period 2008-2013, a host of partners from the public and private sectors are implementing the project and include: the Ministry within the Presidency of the Republic in charge of Decentralization (MPRD), the Government of Madagascar, UN agencies, local non-governmental organizations, and local authorities. Through these partnerships and expertise of all sectors, the project is geared towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

33. Within the framework of this initiative, a multitude of innovative projects are underway. For instance, during November 2008, an exchange of farmers from Sambaina to Antsirabe, a nearby village that is more advanced in rural development, took place with the goal of Sambaina villagers learning different agricultural techniques. Additionally, an electrification project for the area of Ankadimanga was also initiated. Recent developments in the area, including a health centre and a primary and secondary school, has made Ankadimanga a hub for thousands of people and has thus emphasized

the need for electrification. This was made possible because of the positive partnership with the country's Rural Electrification Development agency (ADER).

34. UNDP's Growing Sustainable Business (GSB) Initiative works to build business-led solutions to poverty, by enabling the private sector, through building strategic partnerships between local stakeholders, make a greater contribution to poverty reduction and sustainable development. Its initiative in Madagascar has actively facilitated innovative and pro-poor business ventures in a number of sectors. Activities undertaken include promoting ecotourism, encouraging the use of solar power, strengthening small and medium-sized enterprises in the hydrocarbon sector, promoting energy diversification, and the furthering the production of artemisinin-based remedies against malaria.

(iii) Activities by civil society organizations

35. The Public-Private Foundation (PPAF) is a non-profit organization dedicated to reducing poverty through a business approach to development. PPAF brings together the corporate sector, government, civil society, academia, and the United Nations, to facilitate linkages, promote partnerships, encourage capacity-building and mobilize resources, commerce and investment in support of development. Its aim is forging productive linkages among organizations able to enhance pro-poor business at the national level, many of which have scant knowledge of the United Nations and the MDGs.

36. The Permanent Mission of Madagascar in New York recently partnered with PPAF, Maventy Health International (www.maventy.org) and Project C.U.R.E. (www.projectcure.org) to make a permanent impact with the shipment of three 40-foot containers worth \$1.2 million of medical equipment to the Government of Madagascar. The project aims to bring sustainable infrastructure development in the healthcare sector for the benefit of thousands of Malagasy people.

37. As for costs of the shipments of the medical equipments, the Permanent Mission of Madagascar, PPAF and Project C.U.R.E worked together once more to raise an additional \$US100,000.00 from private donors. The first container was delivered on March, 2009 and two additional containers are to be sent during the Summer of 2009. Based on the need determined during the assessment, the medical equipment will be delivered to the following locations: Befelatanana Hospital, Antananarivo; the regional hospital of Diego, Diego Suarez; and the Anivorano Nord Clinic.

38. The Observatory for Cultural and Audiovisual Communication (OCCAM) was established 1997 by UNESCO initially as a Project based on the notion that communication is a fundamental factor for social, economic and cultural development. The organization, which is now in Special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, focuses its work on the promotion of the crucial UN values of peace, tolerance and human rights through audiovisual means of communication: cinema, television and the internet.

39. Over the course of the past two years, OCCAM has increased its activities in support of the UNPPA by bringing the benefits of the digital revolution to disadvantaged communities in Madagascar and the Dominican Republic. It widened its partnership with both public and private institutions in support of activities in the UNPPA pilot countries, to include the Infopoverty Institute of the University of Oklahoma, the Politecnico di Milano, Skylogic, WINFOCUS and the faculty of Agriculture of the University of Milan.

40. In September 2007, OCCAM undertook a mission to Madagascar, meeting with representatives of the Ministries of Health, Education and Foreign Affairs to discuss delivery of e-health services to the country. In January 2008, it undertook, in collaboration with WINFOCUS (an international non-profit scientific society which promotes the use of “point-of-care” ultrasound into clinical practice, in order to improve primary, emergency and critical care in hospitals) organized a two-day training course for seventy-two doctors and nurses on the use of ultrasound technology in emergency situations.

41. Since September 2008, OCCAM's partnership with Skylogic enabled the first ICT Village of Madagascar to have a free one-year internet connectivity, thus boosting the use of internet and computers by its partners, ranging from farmers to teachers, at the new community resource centre. About 500 persons from Sambaina and the neighboring District of Manjakandriana continue to use regularly the local services while 600 students aged 11 to 15 are regularly trained to accelerate digital literacy of the rural village.

42. In 2007 and 2008, the Agricultural Cooperative Development International/Volunteers Overseas Cooperative Association (ACDI/VOCA), with funding by the Millennium Challenge Corporation, provided consultancy services and assistance to Madagascar's Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Fisheries. In efforts to combat poverty and corruption, ACDI/VOCA conducted training to build the capacity of the Ministry and strengthen partnerships for rural development and agricultural marketing. Additionally, it provided technical assistance in agribusiness to help the ministry improve investment incentives in agriculture.

43. Maventy Health International (MHI) works in collaborative fashion with the Ministry of Health in Madagascar, along with several other non-profit organizations, to promote the development of a sustainable health care model in the Anivorano-Nord region in the northern part of the country. MHI has collaborated with Project C.U.R.E. in efforts to support the development of medical projects, and in September 2008, signed a MOU with Sepsis Alliance to consider a collaborative approach in the fight against infectious diseases as they relate to sepsis. Its health-related work, including through facilitating and coordinating the international collaborative initiatives of organizations interested in improving healthcare delivery in Madagascar, has contributed considerably to rural development efforts.

B. Dominican Republic

(i) Overview

44. The Dominican Republic is one of the poorest countries in the Caribbean with 46% of the population living in poverty and 12% in extreme poverty. Although manufacturing and service sectors are rapidly growing in importance, agriculture is still a major part of the economy. Over 30% of the land is suitable for cropping, 17% of the workforce is engaged in this field, and in 2006, agriculture made up 9.9% of the annual GDP. The sector is the biggest source of domestic consumption and is the second largest earner of exports. In 2007, the Dominican Republic joined the Central America Free Trade Agreement (now re-named DR-CAFTA), becoming one of the major trading blocks in the American Continent, which further highlights the importance of the agricultural sector.

45. Serious challenges face the agricultural sector, including frequent hurricanes, earthquakes and tropical storms. Tropical storms in September of 2007, for instance, were responsible for a loss of \$1.8 billion in revenues that year. Additionally, low public investment, decreasing availability of credit, weak productive infrastructure, and low levels of education in the workforce, all impede the advancement of the agricultural sector. To tackle these challenges, the Presidential Commission on the Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development (COPDES) was established in 2004. The Commission is charged with monitoring and evaluating the country's progress towards achieving the MDGs. It includes the participation of various sectors such as government, private sector, civil society, and the United Nations (through the UNPPA). Its Task Force on Hunger aims to strengthen these partnerships to raise awareness and attention of the MDGs in low income areas.

46. Many public-private alliances have been developed during these years. Some include the ability to lease machinery from the private sector through the Ministry of Agriculture, joint planning and rice importing agreements, financial support to small farmers and agro-industrial enterprises by government institutions, and the FAO Special

Food Program for Food Security partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and NGOs. These developments work to counter the numerous challenges mentioned and improve rural development as a whole.

(ii) Activities by United Nations agencies/organizations

47. IFAD's country programme for the Dominican Republic includes two major strategic objectives: (a) social capital and community development and (b) income generation. Regarding the latter, efforts are directed toward identification of agricultural and non-agricultural income-generating activities and facilitating the participation of small producers in local, national, and export markets.

48. In response to a request by the Government of the Dominican Republic and in alignment with the country's social and economic development policies, IFAD has just finalized the design of a new project that aims to improve the competitiveness and linkages to markets of smallholder farmers and their economic organizations in one of the poorest area of the country, specifically, the eleven western provinces on the border with Haiti. The project will focus on both staple food crops (e.g. rice, beans and bananas) for local, regional and national markets and niche export commodities (e.g. quality coffee, organic banana).

49. The project will actively promote alliances among key public or private players involved in the selected value chains. The objective of these alliances is to reinforce the relationship between smallholder producer organizations and the key private sector players in the value chain. These stronger relationships will improve the long-term position of producer organisations as suppliers in national and international markets. Other project components include strengthening smallholder farmers' organizations by building management and marketing capacities, and promoting technological innovation and diversification, as well as rural finance.

50. The World Food Programme (WFP) aims to replicate a programme supported by FUNDAR, a Mexican foundation with experience in the rural sector, in the Dominican Republic, given that the Dominican Republic is also prone to natural disasters. The

Mexican programme provided pre-harvest credit and insurance to cover the loan to farmers with surplus capacity, as a form of protection and for agricultural extension services.

51. An Irrigated Land and Watershed Management Project, currently being funded by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development with the goal of increasing productivity in irrigated agriculture and promoting beneficiary participation through water user associations, is being implemented in various parts of the Dominican Republic. Consultant services are required for the supervision of reconditioning, modernization, and follow-up work on irrigation systems and watershed management.

(iii) Activities by civil society organizations

52. The Observatory for Cultural and Audiovisual Communication (OCCAM) signed an agreement in late 2007 with the municipality of Santo Domingo Norte for the creation of a new Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) Village in the country. ICT villages aim to strengthen e-learning, promote telemedicine in local health care facilities, facilitate the use of internet, e-mail and word processing in local government offices, and using internet-based consulting for improving agricultural production. Following the signing of the agreement, 30 computers were procured by OCCAM and transported to the municipality to complete the first phase of the project. In March 2008, OCCAM met with the Vice-President of the Republic on the launch of the Infopoverty Programme in that country as well as the establishment of the Infopoverty Institute of the Caribbean at the Catholic University in Santo Domingo.

53. The Instituto Dominicano de Desarrollo Integral (IDDI), a non-profit organization dedicated to contributing to the integral development of the Dominican Republic, with special emphasis on its low-income population, is committed to working for the development of the country's rural areas. IDDI has initiated programmes in the area of health, basic sanitation, education, infrastructure and the environment throughout the country. It promotes entrepreneurship and has helped to create successful and sustainable

micro-businesses through the introduction of micro-credit grants combining funds from its own portfolio together with training programmes. Its strengths include community participation, sustainability, networking, and public-private alliances.

54. In the area of agribusiness, the Public Private Alliance Foundation (PPAF), together with New York representatives from the National Supermarkets Association, the distribution company Super-Produce, and the Centre for Export and Investment of the Dominican Republic, collaborated through GLOCAL, a local growers' NGO, to meet with growers, Government officials and foreign aid agencies in the Dominican Republic. Initial purchases and shipments have been made, agreements have been reached with the Dominican Agribusiness Board (JAD) and GLOCAL, and steps are being taken toward investment and project funding for capacity-building on production and supply chain management. Finally, with regard to efforts in the area of renewable energy, PPAF and business collaborators have explored issues of sugar-based ethanol and related bio-energy with representatives of businesses and growers, United Nations staff, investors, governments, NGOs and universities. This has led to a partnership with ResearchPAYS®, a market research consulting firm for businesses, to develop further initiatives for stakeholder collaboration in this area.

55. PPAF has also mobilized a grant from the Western Union Foundation for microfinance training and lending by Dominican NGO Esperanza International, and raised funds for community efforts to rebuild housing after tropical storms hit the Dominican Republic on several occasions during 2007 to 2009.

C. Angola

(i) Overview

56. The end of the armed conflict in Angola, which had raged for nearly three decades, has decisively contributed to a climate of social stability and economic growth. Peace has enabled the free movement of persons and a revival of economic activity throughout the country. As a result, Angolans are participating in that supports the fight against hunger and poverty and contributes towards the development of rural communities. Since

2002, the Government's investment in the agricultural sector has been progressively and effectively increasing. This reflects the strategic importance of agriculture for the sustainable development of the country, given the vast percentage of the population that depends on it for employment and subsistence.

57. In May 2007 the Rural Development Programme (PDR) coordinated by Angola's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development was implemented. The issue of rural development is at the core of the activities of the Ministry, in addition to other programmes such as the Rural Outreach and Development Programme (Pedro) which aims to provide farmers with agricultural supplies, including seeds, fertilizers and tools, as well as technical assistance services.

58. The PDR's prime objective is of contributing to the improvement of living conditions in rural areas in an effort to align them with those in the nation's main cities; harmoniously integrating the development of rural communities in national economic and social development programmes; installing systems for water capturing, processing and distribution, as well as basic sanitation; organizing rural trade, crafts, and local production, and disseminating basic knowledge and simple techniques considered useful for agriculture, animal rearing and in the processing and transformation of animal products.

59. Following legislative elections in September 2008, and under the new structure of the Government, the State Secretariat for Rural Development was created as an organ of the central administration of the State, responsible for defining, monitoring, coordinating, guiding and implementing national policies in support of rural development. The fundamental objective of the Angolan Government is to reduce the levels of absolute poverty, and to promote rapid, sustainable and comprehensive economic growth, as well as the reduction of regional disparities among its nineteen provinces.

60. With the creation of the State Secretariat for Rural Development, came the approval, in January 2009, of the Executive Programme which aims to promote integrated rural development projects, revitalize and diversify the rural economy, stimulate the creation

of community organizations, promote rural finance and trade networks and promote public-private partnerships in order to improve the capacity for intervention in the sector.

(ii) Activities by United Nations agencies/organizations

61. IFAD's recent initiatives included two projects, the Northern Region Food Crops Development Project and the Northern Fishing Communities Development Programme, both of which ended their activities in 2007. In 2007, a new rural development project was approved. In collaboration with the World Bank, as well as a grant from the Japan Policy and Human Resources Development Fund (PHRD), the Market-oriented Smallholder Agriculture Project is underway, aimed at increasing the agricultural production of smallholders in three rural provinces. Among other components, the project's focus is on strengthening capacities of the private sector and non-governmental agricultural service providers in the project area.

62. The United Nations Fund for Population activities (UNFPA) is supporting national efforts aimed at strengthening the country's health sector, primarily in rural areas, through funding of two projects aimed at increasing the availability of quality, integrated reproductive health services and increasing the availability of reproductive health information and services for adolescents and youth. In the area of gender, population and youth, it has funded capacity development workshops organized at the municipality level, with the goal of establishing linkages between increased sustainable development and women's empowerment and participation in decision making, as well as their increased access to reproductive health services.

(iii) Activities by civil society organizations

63. A three way partnership between ACDI/VOCA, Cabinda Gulf Oil Company (CABGOC) and USAID was established in December of 2003 as the Cabinda Agribusiness Development Alliance (CADA) with the objective of increasing household wealth for a large number of families in the Cabinda Province of Angola. One successful project was a CABGOC funded program to build the capacity of local farmers to supply

fresh produce to workers at the oil export terminal, local restaurants, stores and hotels. The project resulted in the sale of fresher and less expensive produce than what was traditionally imported from the outside.

64. In addition, CADA empowered 6,226 beneficiaries, thirty percent of whom were women, by helping them to develop profitable businesses through business and agricultural training to farmers. In April 2007, 30 smallholder CADA producers participated a four-day regional agricultural fair held in Cabinda, which had over 3,000 attendees and 295 displays of different produce.

D. Ethiopia

(i) Overview

65. Ethiopia has an agricultural based economy, which employs over 85% of its population. It is often severely hit by drought throughout the region. In addition, impediments such as poor management of land and resource base, limited information, lack of appropriate technology, failure to integrate relevant policies, and lack of adequate implementation capacity, keep productivity levels low.

66. Long term food insecurity has left much of the population dependent on food aid for survival. Agriculture is one of the country's most promising resources and Ethiopia has the potential to be self-sufficient in grains and for export development in livestock. With this in mind, the Government established the Agricultural Development-Led Industrialization Strategy in 2007 which aims to use agriculture as the base for the country's overall development. Its distinctive features include the commercialization of smallholder agriculture through diversification, a shift to high value crops, the support and development of large scale commercial agriculture, effective integration of farmers with domestic and external markets, and tailoring interventions to address the specific needs of the country's varied agro-ecological zones. The government's role in the strategy is to create policy measures to promote these aims. Some of these policies

include agricultural extension and research, design and operationalization of growth corridors, agricultural export promotion, and food security and safety-net programmes.

(ii) Activities by United Nations agencies/organizations

67. Over the past three decades, IFAD has supported a total of 13 rural poverty reduction projects and programmes in Ethiopia, with an estimated overall cost of US\$588 million. IFAD has also provided debt relief to Ethiopia amounting to US\$28 million under the Debt Initiative for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC).

68. In 2008, IFAD adopted its Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP) for the country, which is based on Ethiopia's second-generation poverty reduction strategy paper, and other relevant planning documents. The COSOP focuses on three strategic objectives and is specifically aimed at enhancing access by rural poor people to: (a) natural resources (land and water); (b) improved agricultural production technologies and support services; and (c) financial services.

69. Ongoing IFAD operations in Ethiopia include an Agricultural Marketing Improvement Programme, which supports the government's commitment to improve agricultural marketing. The aim is to stabilize domestic grain prices and encourage smallholder farmers to increase production and improve their incomes. Also underway is a Participatory Small-Scale Irrigation Development Programme, which improves food security, family nutrition and incomes for poor rural households by developing irrigation schemes for small-scale farmers. A Pastoral Community Development Project has also been implemented to ameliorate prospects for sustainable livelihoods among herders living in arid and semi-arid lowlands. Finally, a Rural Financial Intermediation Programme has been put in place to help poor people who have no access to basic financial services.

70. The World Bank's Structural Adjustment Credit Project has provided an opportunity for the private sector to use foreign exchange by increasing its availability, and through enhancing its role through price decontrol and reduced state ownership and operation of assets. In addition, its National Fertilizer Sector Project has been implemented with a

view to creating an enabling environment for the growth of the fertilizer sector and fertilizer use in the country. The project has been co-funded by fertilizer importers and donors.

71. UNDP's Growing Sustainable Business (GSB) initiative in Ethiopia is actively facilitating innovative and pro-poor business ventures through its GoE/UNDP Support and Facilitation for Private Sector Development Programme, executed by the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Activities undertaken include the Gaia Project, involving the investment and promotion of the use of locally produced ethanol-fueled cooking stoves, and the Water Project, a publicly backed commercial model for provision of water delivery services to farmers at a commercial rate.

72. UNFPA has supported the development of rural livelihood in this country through its women's empowerment programme. In partnership with the United Nations Foundation and the Nike Foundation, UNFPA is funding a three-year US\$1.5 million project in the area of women's empowerment. Within the framework of UNFPA's mandate, such livelihood intervention programmes have an important role to play in promoting economic autonomy particularly for women. From the organization's perspective, the right combination of delivering sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention skills and knowledge can help both women and young girls increase their self-autonomy and decision-making ability.

73. The World Food Programme's Purchase for Progress (P4P) Initiative, which links small farmers to the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX), is being further expanded to involve private actors. The project is in the process of setting up a new marketplace serving farmers, processors, exporters, and consumers in which the support of local food processors in areas of high malnutrition, and life sciences companies able to improve the micronutrient content of products, for example, can make important contributions.

(iii) Activities by civil society organizations

74. Lutheran World Federation's LWF-Ethiopia programme has, over the past two years, focused its attention on implementing its Integrated Community Development Projects (ICDPs) in all its geographical intervention areas in Ethiopia. The main strategic objective of the ICDPs is to shift major programmes from building irrigation, health and school structures to educating and empowering the rural community with knowledge and skills to successfully pursue individual and community needs.

75. Ethiopia has Africa's largest livestock population, which is largely concentrated in pastoralist areas of the country. ACDI/VOCA implements USAID's Pastoralist Livelihoods Initiative which aims to assist pastoralists create access to more profitable markets, as they were are traditionally concerned with minimizing risk due to droughts and economic hardship rather than maximizing profits. ACDI/VOCA has provided training workshops to develop the business skills of pastoralists and establish operationally sustainable market facilities that enable them to sell their livestock for fair prices. Additionally a pilot intervention to support drought-affected pastoralists was undertaken that provided emergency bank credit and the compilation and dissemination of market information to accelerate commercial take off and increase coordination among NGOs.

E. Initiatives undertaken at United Nations Headquarters in New York

76. In May 2007, the Public Private Alliance Foundation (PPAF) launched its first "Partners against Poverty" event, in which it sought to connect policy-makers with local development initiatives in the Dominican Republic and Madagascar. At its second annual "Partners against Poverty" event held at United Nations Headquarters in July 2008, over seventy representatives from the private sector, government, civil society and United Nations agencies gathered to discuss, under the overall theme "Awareness, Agreement and Action", possible ways to increase collaboration amongst relevant stakeholders to promote health, agribusiness, renewable energy, sustainable tourism

and women, microfinance and entrepreneurship in Madagascar and the Dominican Republic.

77. Sulabh International Social Service Organization is a pan-India non-governmental organization in consultative status with ECOSOC, working in the field of environmental sanitation. It is actively involved in implementing improved sanitation facilities throughout India, and has developed an innovative, two-pit, pour flush compost toilet for safe disposal of human excreta that is both hygienic and affordable. In addition, the waste is treated through a technological process for use as a soil conditioner. Sulabh has also developed the technology of generating biogas from human waste from public toilets for use in cooking and on-site electricity generation.

78. In April 2008, within the framework of the UNPPA, the feasibility of sending a needs-assessment mission to Madagascar to evaluate possible sites in the capital city of Antananarivo for the construction of public toilet complexes with biogas and effluent treatment plants for on-site recycling of human waste was discussed. A mission took place in August 2008, and an assessment made for the construction of the eco-friendly toilets in individual homes for an environment conducive to sustainable development of the area and improvement in the health and well-being of the people. Currently, efforts are underway to find possible sources of funding for the successful implementation of the project.

79. In both 2008 and 2009, OCCAM invited high-level representatives of the four UNPPA pilot countries to participate in the annual Infopoverty Conference held each March at United Nations Headquarters. In 2008, both the President of the Republic of Madagascar as well as the current Vice-President of the Dominican Republic participated. One of the annual meeting's goals is to give visibility to the results achieved through the use of new digital technologies for the advancement of rural development.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

80. **In order to strengthen public-private partnerships in support of rural development in the four pilot countries, there must be a major scaling up of engagement by United Nations system organizations with civil society and private sector partners in close collaboration with the Governments of the four pilot countries. United Nations entities, which have outreach to the private sector, foundations and non-governmental organizations, could expand their efforts to foster partnerships that focus broadly on sharing and coordinating resources, knowledge and expertise for furthering the goal of rural development in these countries.**

81. The current economic and financial crisis is threatening not only to wipe out any recent gains made towards achieving the MDGs, but also could prevent these goals from being achieved by the target date of 2015. **The international community must therefore pay special attention to the implications of the crisis on rural populations and implement specific measures to address them. Of critical importance is the need for sufficient additional resources to be targeted for rural and agricultural development programmes and to address the challenge of food insecurity.**

82. The fact that women make up the substantial majority of the agricultural workforce in developing countries gives crucial importance to the role of women in accelerating sustainable rural development. **The integral role that rural women play should be highlighted during consideration of the Commission on the Status of Women's 2010 priority theme on the Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing +15) at its session next year. Relevant policy recommendations could in turn serve as useful inputs to the Council's 2010 Annual Ministerial Review which will focus on the theme of "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women", the outcome of which could then feed into the**

Commission's 2012 session when it considers the priority theme of "The empowerment of rural women in relation to climate change and food security".

83. As possible follow up to the Commission on Sustainable Development's (CSD) third implementation cycle encompassing CSD 16 and 17, which focused on rural development as one of its thematic areas along with agriculture, land, drought, desertification and Africa, **the Commission's major groups could be invited to pay increased attention to the promotion of rural development in each of the four pilot countries, and to report on their achievements at CSD's overall appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 to be held during its cycle in 2016/2017. Possible inputs for the cycle could include new ideas and approaches for tackling rural development challenges in the four countries, as well as proposals and recommendations for the Commission's consideration.**

84. There is a need to replicate, adapt and scale-up initiatives which have proven to be successful in the area of rural development. **To that end, efforts should be made by the United Nations system to further strengthen global advocacy, including through sharing of information, and through discussion groups and on-line forums in which best practices and lessons learned could be highlighted.**

85. **In view of the voluntary nature of the Alliance, and the need to go beyond its advocacy role, consideration could be given to strengthening the support provided by the United Nations Secretariat in facilitating partnerships for rural development for the benefit of the pilot countries.**

ANNEX

List of stakeholders providing inputs to the present report

Organizations/agencies of the United Nations system

World Bank

United Nations Fund for Population Activities

International Labour Organization

United Nations Office for Partnerships

United Nations Development Programme

World Food Programme

International Fund for Agricultural Development

Civil society organizations

Sulabh International

Public-Private Alliance Foundation

Lutheran World Federation

Instituto Dominicano de Desarrollo Integral

Maventy Health International

Agricultural Cooperative Development International/Volunteers in Overseas

Cooperative Assistance

The Observatory for Cultural and Audiovisual Communication