

# Let the farmers lead

Representatives from 18 farmers' organisations in Africa, have called for farmers' organisations to play a greater role in the promotion of agriculture. Farmers' organisations are a valuable, under-utilised resource in serving as a development counterpart to governments and international organisations.

One of the main conclusions of the *World Development Report* is that farmers' organisations are key actors in the promotion of development and agriculture, and that their role as a counterpart to governments and international organisations should be strengthened.

Meeting in Cape Town, IFAP's (the International Federation of Agricultural Producers) African members agreed to work together with all African farmers' organisations, including all sub-regional organisations (the Network of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organisations of West Africa or Roppa, the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions or Sacau, the Eastern African Farmers' Federation or EAFF, and Propac), and establish permanent liaisons and consultation with African institutions, including the African Union, Nepad and others, to promote the stronger inclusion of farmers' organisations in the development of agriculture.

Participants were also concerned about the effect of the rise in food prices. They urged governments and the international community to support investment to increase productivity in a sustainable way, rather than bringing in controls on food prices and export supplies that would take away incentives of African farmers to produce.



Jacques Bonou, chairperson of the IFAP African Committee, emphasised: "Food aid is not a sustainable answer for this food shortage. The real solution lies in building up the agricultural infrastructure in African countries and increasing productive capacity."

IFAP vice-president, Ajay Vashee, noted: "IFAP will do everything it can to unify farmers' organisations and international organisations working in Africa and to make sure the interests of farmers are being represented."

Governments, however, need to step up and take action to work with farmers' organisations and provide the resources that farmers demand to create food security in their country."

African farmers will follow up on these proposals with their colleagues from other countries at IFAP's 38th World Farmers' Congress in Warsaw, Poland from 30 May to 6 June 2008, along with messages from IFAP's regional committees.

#### For further information contact:

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#### What is IFAP?

IFAP is the world farmers organisation representing over 600 million farm families grouped in 115 national organisations in 80 countries. It is a global network in which farmers from industrialised and developing countries exchange concerns and set common priorities. IFAP advocates farmers' interests at the international level since 1946 and has "general consultative status" with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. 