THE RURAL DIALOGUE GROUPS

The Cases of Colombia and Ecuador

Rome, October, 2013
GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Membership - diversity of actors (social, geographic, political).
- Agenda driven by country specificities and context.
- Capacity to discuss emerging issues.
- Sounding boards for discussion of public policies before enactment.
- A place where IFAD can consult on investing priorities.
GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Decisions by consensus.
- Evidence-based dialogue, supported by policy analysis or targeted research commissioned by RDG.
- Independent from government, but RDGs include high-ranking government officials.
- RDG Executive Secretaries are respected individuals that can interact (and convene) broadly across social and political sectors.
COLOMBIA
CONTRIBUTION OF COLOMBIAN RDG

- Enhancing visibility of rural issues in the public policy agenda (paying back a historic debt).
- Emphasizing that rural development must be built from the territories, with their actors and from their visions, interests and dynamics.
- Making a case that better asset distribution contributes to more equitable and dynamic growth of rural areas.
- Highlighting the importance of increasing human, social and physical capital (public goods) in rural areas, overcoming a purely sectorial agricultural approach (agriculture).
- Emphasizing the need for significant institutional reforms, strengthening governmental and nongovernmental organizations, at national and territorial levels.
SPECIFIC RESULTS

- Land and Rural Development Law project includes:
  - Territorial focus
  - Income generation through comprehensive programs in poor communities
  - Emphasis on public investment on public goods and social capital
  - Participatory approach, involving social organizations and civil society
- Supporting the rural and agrarian agenda in the ongoing Peace Negotiations
- Colombian Rural Development Institute (INCODER) – new vision and strategy, emphasizing income generation, organizational strengthening and capacity building for communities endowed with land
- Rural strategy of National Agency for Overcoming Extreme Poverty (ANSPE)
THE RDG HAS ALSO HELPED TO

▶ An informed debate on agriculture, rural development and poverty reduction (seminars, symposia)
▶ Convening meetings between actors that usually do not talk to each other (association of large farmers, SAC, meeting with peasant organizations)
▶ Bringing these issues to the regions (RDGs and forums in the Caribbean region, Huila and Boyacá)
ECUADOR
CONTRIBUTION OF ECUADOREAN RDG

- Discussion and recommendations about specific policies before presenting to the President’s Office: Seeds Law, Competitive Agricultural Plans, Rural Development Bank, Land Law, Rural Education.
- Issue-specific discussion with Ministers of Economic Policy, Social Policy, and Trade, and with Chief Presidential Agricultural Advisor.
- Bringing together actors from agricultural sectors of different regions to discuss: (a) government initiatives, and (b) concerns of small farmers.
- Targeted studies, e.g., on coastal small farmer productivity, used by Agricultural Trade Undersecretary to define specific country positions on trade and trade negotiations.
THE RDG HAS ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO

- The recognition of the importance of providing public goods, e.g., Seed Plan for corn, rice and potatoes (USD 10 million)
- Analysis and debate on productivity of small farmer rice production, leading to the Plan for Competitive Development of Rice Production
- Bringing together public and private actors to discuss food sovereignty and food security, leading to a new milk support system based on dairy exports
- Bringing together Rural Development Bank and Savings and Loans coops, leading to joint proposal submitted to Office of the President
LINKS WITH IFAD COUNTRY PROGRAMS AND NEXT STEPS
REGARDING IFAD

- RDG does not have responsibility or authority in relation to IFAD projects or other grants. However, IFAD contributes to IFAD’s operations through:
  - Creating linkages with non-traditional partners, including private sector but also government agencies.
  - Providing a fora for identification and/or discussion of issues and objectives during COSOP preparation.
  - Sustaining key IFAD issues and priorities during changes in government staff.
  - Generating information, analysis and contacts that can be used in the design of IFAD projects.
NEW EMPHASES FOR 2013 - 2016

- Increased participation of IFAD staff in RDGs and their activities and improved coordination with IFAD country programs (taking advantage of decentralization and country offices)
- Increased participation in RDGs of leaders of organizations of smallholders and other sectors of the rural poor
- Focusing on issues of greater strategic importance related to high-level priorities of governments and of the rural poor