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From: Twyford & Associates [twyfordj@spiderweb.com.au]
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To: Committee, Treaties (REPS)
Subject: Australia membership in IFAD

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BY G. E. Gould

The Chairman
Mr Andrew Southcott MP
Joint Standing Committee for Treaties

Dear Mr Southcott

IFAD Agreement with Australia

It was with great concern that I recently learnt of the possibility that Australia could withdraw from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). This organisation has been instrumental in developing and implementing projects in needy under-developed countries for many years and has carried the face of Australia as a caring and generous nation and contributor.

It is important that Australia remain a member of IFAD as, although its contribution is quite modest, it shows solidarity with other developed and non-developed member nations as to the needs of the poor and most importantly it shows that Australia cares about the needs of the poor outside its immediate interests and region. Given the present tensions created by terrorism and the response to terrorism, it is imperative that Australia be seen as caring and concerned towards cultures that appear quite foreign to many (but not most) Australians and not just those countries whom we see as future trading partners or neighbours.

Having worked in well over 30 developing countries in the past 30 years for a number of aid institutions, many of them in countries having very different beliefs and culture to Australia, I know it will be a backward step if Australia fails to recognise the important opportunity that membership in IFAD provides for Australians to be part of a universal aid effort to those countries in most need and at the same time, to benefit through sharing in the cultural benefits provided through its membership.

Of secondary importance, yet no doubt still important, as to why we should retain membership with IFAD, is that there have been a number of spin-offs economically for Australian companies and institutions in being successful in picking up training and educational employment as well as the sale of agricultural machinery. I would not be surprised if this has actually exceeded any financial contributions through IFAD membership over time.

I would be happy to share some of my experiences (which have been varied and humbling) with you and any other members of your committee, if you would like to make the time.

Hoping that you can see the benefits of continuing the agreement with IFAD and that your committee chooses for Australia to stay an active partner in international development

Sincerely

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