



Submission No 2

Review of IFAD Amendment Bill 2012

Organisation: Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry



Mr Jerome Brown
Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
PO Box 6021, Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Brown,

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) wishes to express its support for Australia rejoining the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

Report 60 of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties contains no concerns from DAFF with respect to IFAD's performance. While AusAID will respond to the concerns that led to Australia's secession, and the associated resourcing issues, DAFF's view is that our re-engagement with IFAD would alleviate some negative consequences of secession.

IFAD is one of the three Rome-based food agencies, along with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and the World Food Program (WFP). IFAD works closely with the FAO and WFP, as does the Australian Government. As lead agency for Australia's FAO engagement, DAFF invests significant resources in the FAO, in governance, technical and capacity building aspects. The investment of these resources would see greater return if Australia also had a presence in IFAD, which would enable cooperative engagement between these agencies with Australian priorities in mind.

As a consequence of Australia's secession from IFAD, we have been unable to formally participate in IFAD activities. Rejoining IFAD could provide increased opportunities for our agricultural experts to contribute to food security and agricultural productivity.

Membership of IFAD would further provide an opportunity to advocate Australia's comprehensive approach to food security, including the role of agricultural trade and development, and to provide targeted advice and assistance on issues directly related to Australia's agricultural interests. These issues include climate change and biosecurity, plant pest and disease control, and livestock quarantine particularly in near neighbours such as PNG, Timor Leste, Eastern Indonesia and the Philippines.

For these reasons, DAFF supports Australia's re-engagement with IFAD as a priority.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Bie
A/g First Assistant Secretary
Trade and Market Access Division

5 October 2012