

TR2 March 07  
Submission No: .....22.....RECEIVED  
06 APR 2004BY: *R. Hartman*

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Ronald Hartman [mailto:r.hartman@ifad.org]**Sent:** Tuesday, 6 April 2004 2:17 AM**To:** Gould, Gillian (REPS)**Cc:** Ariano Lucy; Benhammouche Abla; Bishay Mona; traceyburton44@hotmail.com; Cappai Stefania; Cordeschi Fiorella; Dariol Josephine; DePetro Daniela; Devito Monica; Gillman Helen; Harvey Kim; Klavins Sandra; Lattughi Jessica; Martin Deborah; SaintAnge Perin; Turco Maria**Subject:** IFAD Staff Members Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties**Importance:** High

Dear Ms Gould

Please find attached correspondence from IFAD's Australian staff members for submission to the "Joint Standing Committee on Treaties" and for distribution to the individual committee members.

Please also find attached as an Annex our initial letter to our respective MPs, dated 20<sup>th</sup> October 2003, for which we have yet to receive a reply.

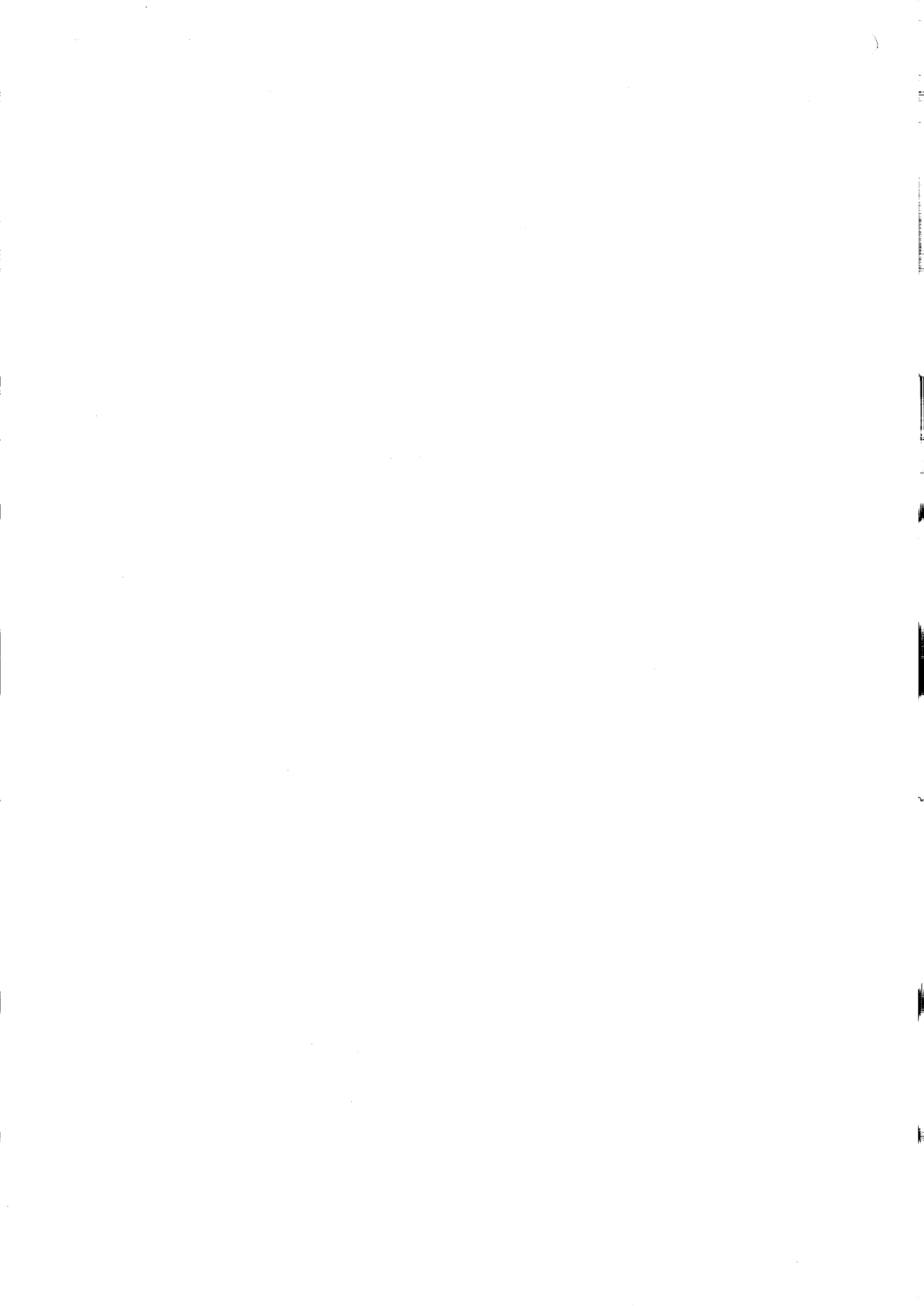
We look forward to receiving confirmation of receipt of this correspondence and a reply to the issues we have raised our letters.

Please note that we will also be forwarding this correspondence to you via facsimile.

We trust all is in order, however should you require any further information, please contact us on the individual email addresses listed above, or alternatively contact me on +39 0654592184.

Kind regards,

Ron Hartman  
Programme Officer  
Asia and the Pacific Division



## **Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties**

### **Australia's withdrawal from the International Fund for Agricultural Development**

by Australian staff members of IFAD

As Australian citizens employed at the International Fund for Agricultural Development, we feel it is important to address certain issues that have been raised in submissions and statements to the Joint Committee.

We reiterate our support for IFAD and our concern at Australia's stated intention to withdraw from the organization, as outlined in a fax sent to our parliamentary representatives on 20 October 2003. In that fax (attached as Annex 1) we expressed our concern that the Australian authorities had not taken time to consult with Australian staff in IFAD, or to inform us of the official Federal Government position.

We did not receive any response from our MPs to the concerns. However, an Australian staff member was contacted by Ms Karen Sandercock, Adviser (Development Cooperation) at the Australian Embassy in Rome, offering "those staff who are engaged with IFAD as Australians" the opportunity to meet with Ambassador Murray Cobban and herself so that they could "provide some clarification and information on the Australian Government's decision to withdraw from IFAD".

The fact that the meeting was attended by only three Australians has been referred to on a number of occasions during the JSCOT hearings. We would like to stress that this was in no way an indication of lack of concern on the part of Australian IFAD staff. In fact, 12 staff members had confirmed their intention to attend the meeting on 24 November 2003. When the embassy requested that the meeting be rescheduled, about three hours before the appointment, unfortunately it was not possible for everyone concerned to attend.

During this meeting, Mr Cobban and Ms Sandercock firmly maintained that the decision to withdraw from IFAD had been made at ministerial level, was not open for discussion, and regardless of the recommendation of the Joint Committee, the decision would not be reversed.

The three Australians who attended the meeting later briefed other staff members on the discussion.

We believe that Australia's withdrawal from IFAD will have a negative impact on nationals working in IFAD, including permanent staff, temporary staff and long-term consultants.

There are 17 employees at IFAD who are Australian nationals.

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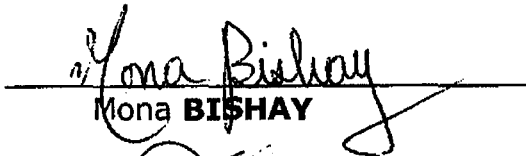
We are particularly concerned about claims made during the JSCOT hearings that "a large number of Australians in IFAD are actually dual nationals, as opposed to being solely Australian citizens".

What should we deduce from this statement? Are we to assume that dual nationals merit less concern by the Australian Government than people holding only Australian citizenship? We would like to express grave concern about the implications of this statement.

Thank you

  
Lucy **ARIANO**

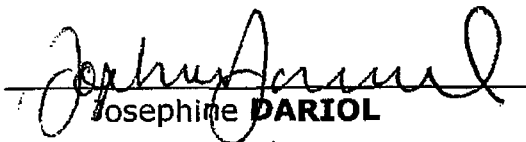
  
Abia **BENHAMMOUCHE**

  
Mona **BISHAY**

  
Tracey **BURTON**


  
Stefania **CAPPAI**


  
Fiorella **CORDESCHI**

  
Josephine **DARIOL**

  
Daniela **DE PETRO**

  
Monica **DE VITO**

  
Helen **GILLMAN**

  
Ronald **HARTMAN**

  
Kim **HARVEY**

  
Sandra **KLAVINS**

  
Jessica **LATTUGHI**

  
Deborah **MARTIN**

  
Périn **SAINT ANGE**

  
Maria **TURCO**

20 October 2003

Dears Sirs and Mesdames,

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is a specialized agency of the United Nations dedicated to eradicating rural poverty and hunger. Since 1978, it has invested USD 7.7 billion in more than 630 rural development projects in 115 countries and territories around the world.

As staff members of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) we want to express our concern that Australia has (as far as we know unilaterally) chosen not to continue to support the organization. In August this year, as holders of Australian citizenship, we were informally advised by IFAD of the decision of the Australian Government "not to contribute to IFAD's sixth replenishment and to withdraw as a member of the organization". 1/ It is our understanding that the Australian authorities have also not consulted with the Australian public in general before taking this decision.

We strongly recommend that in the first instance you help us to better understand why this decision has been reached, especially as it appears to us to be at odds with the current international commitment to the Millennium Development Goals of reducing hunger and extreme poverty. There is a growing consensus internationally that these goals will not be met by the year 2015 unless poverty in rural areas is reduced. Three quarters of the world's poor - about 900 million people - live and work in rural areas of developing countries and depend on agriculture and related activities for their livelihoods.

Moreover, we are concerned that the Australian authorities have not yet taken time to consult with Australian staff in the Institution and to inform us of the official Federal Government position.

We would like to request your active participation and intervention at the highest levels possible, with a view to reversing such a decision and avoid the consequential ripple effect in the medium to long-term, particularly as Australia's association with IFAD has generated overseas income well over and above the financial investment made by Australia to the Fund during replenishments. Since 1978, from its Initial Contribution through 5<sup>th</sup> Replenishment, Australia has contributed over AUD 50.7 million.

As we understand the Australian Joint Standing Committee on Treaties of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia has this item on its future agenda and will deliberate on Australia's withdrawal from membership of IFAD, this fax is also copied to Ms. Gillian Gould.

We would request that we be kept informed of developments.

As Australia is an original member of and donor to IFAD since the Agreement Establishing IFAD in 1977, we would encourage you to visit our website, [www.ifad.org](http://www.ifad.org) so


that you may learn more about the organization and its work. In this connection, please be aware that an IFAD Stakeholder Workshop and Meeting, proposed by AusAID will be taking place in Canberra on Wednesday, 22 October 2003 in Seminar Room D, of the Coombs Building, ANU, commencing at 10:00. We urge your attendance, as this venue will provide an ideal opportunity for your intervention.

You will note that we have added several other authorities as copied recipients of this message and hope you will take the time to contact Mr. Colin Barlow, or Mr. Philips Young or Mr. D'Arcy Gibbs who would be able to respond to any query you may have with respect to championing this very serious cause.

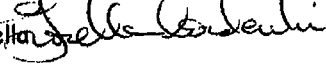
Yours sincerely,

AMBROSINI Renato 

A. J. Benhammouche  
BENHAMMOUCHE Abia 

CAPPAI Stefano 


BISHAY Mona 


CORDESCHI Fiorella 

DARIOL Josephine 


DE VITO Mabel 

FREZZA Tina 

GILLMAN Helen 

HARTMAN Ronald 

HARVEY Kim 

KLAVINS Robert 

LATTUCCI Jessica 

SAINT ANGE Perin 

TURCO Maria 

1/ Quoted from HE Ambassador Murray Alexander Cobban's letter to IFAD's President, Lennart. Båge dated 15 April 2003

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**Copied for information to:**

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Australian Joint Standing Committee  
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