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PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

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**EVALUATION OF FAO'S WORK ON TENURE, RIGHTS AND ACCESS
OF LAND AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCES**

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1. This cover page provides the background and key issues for the attention and guidance of the Committee on the attached report *Evaluation of FAO's work on tenure, rights and access to land and other natural resources* and the Management Response.

Background

2. The Programme Committee at its 103rd session in September 2009 requested the Office of Evaluation to conduct an Evaluation of FAO's work on land tenure and access to land. In view of the strong linkages between tenure, rights and access (TRA) issues, and the broader focus of recent FAO work on land tenure and water rights, including work on tenure of other natural resources (e.g. forestry, livestock, fisheries), the Evaluation's scope was expanded to cover work in these areas as well.

Key issues of the Evaluation report

3. The Evaluation concludes that FAO's work on TRA to land and other natural resources is of critical importance for the achievement of the Organization's goals relating to food security and poverty alleviation. In order to capitalize on the potential synergies that exist and enhance coordination with the rest of FAO's work, a strategic view on TRA is required. This strategic exercise should be carried out in a participatory manner to promote cross-organizational ownership.

4. The Evaluation finds that FAO's TRA related normative work is a valuable resource, significant and of good quality. However, these products are not as well known as they should be and ways should be found of publicising the available tenure resources more widely, including improving access to them through the FAO Web site.

5. Overall, the Evaluation finds FAO's TRA related field programme relevant and it scores highly in terms of service delivery and the contribution made by FAO. The Evaluation expressed concern about an imbalance in the project portfolio due to the volume of TRA related work conducted through the Cooperative Programme (CP) with the World Bank in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

6. The Evaluation supports the need to increase capacity within FAO's headquarters and decentralized network to address the need of guidance for gender mainstreaming in TRA work and to play a useful role in assisting member countries with TRA issues causing and arising from emergencies. The Evaluation concludes that FAO's should be proactive in pursuing issues that are of concern to the Organization's goals during the guidance role to be played for the implementation of the *Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests*. FAO has to take advantage of the potential synergies between its work related to large-scale land acquisition and deforestation.

7. To address the issues identified above, the Evaluation has formulated 8 recommendations, addressing the following aspects: FAO's strategic exercise on TRA; publicising of normative work; monitoring and evaluation of project's performance; balance of land tenure field programme; capacity development; TRA support for emergencies; the Voluntary Guidelines; and advisory work on large-scale land acquisition.

Management Response

8. Management finds the Evaluation report to be well balanced and to provide a positive assessment of the Organization's work on tenure. Management fully accepts the recommendations, which are constructive and forward-looking, and is committed in principle to their implementation. In recognition of the commitment to the Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure shown by member countries and civil society, these guidelines are seen as an important coordination mechanism for responding to the recommendations in a manner that promotes a vision for, and overall coherence of FAO's work on tenure in the context of the Organization's global goals and the current strategic planning process.

9. Management notes the detailed observations under Recommendation 4 regarding FAO's portfolio of work in partnership with International Financing Institutions (IFIs), principally the World Bank through the Cooperative Programme (CP), and concurs that the Organization's programme of support to member countries should be balanced.

Management notes that the Programme Committee identified that land tenure and access to land represent important aspects of development in rural areas, when it proposed the evaluation of FAO's work on tenure. Tenure and secure access to natural resources continue to be critically important to member countries of all regions in their efforts to provide for national food security.

Guidance Sought

10. The Programme Committee may wish to provide its views and guidance on the key issues in the Evaluation report, and to the response to the recommendations and proposed follow-up actions by Management.