**REPORT**

**GAFSP-CSO Mission to Republic of Tajikistan**

**July 16-19, 2012**

**Background: Rationale, Objectives, and Key Activities of the Mission**

This is a report of the GAFSP CSO Mission to the Republic of Tajikistan, conducted by the GAFSP Steering Committee Member-Asia representative, last July 23-29, 2012. The Mission was conducted by Ms. Ma. Estrella Penunia, Secretary General of AFA, Mr. Shun-Te Tsai, President, Taiwan Wax Apple Development Association and Dr. Sheng Feng Kuo, Irrigation Engineer and Professor, University of Kang Ning, Taiwan. Local hosts were the Association of Forest and Land Users in Tajikistan (AFLUT) and the National Association of Dekhan Farmers (NADF), represented by Dr. Kokul Kasirov and Mr. Azizbek Sharipov respectively. AFLUT was in charge for all administrative and logistical arrangements while NADF was in charge for all the field visits and the facilitation of the consultation workshop.

There were six objectives of the Mission:

* Get basic profiles of key FOs and NGOs working for food security
* Get information about the GAFSP processes undertaken by the government and inter-governmental bodies, mainly FAO, WB, IFAD
* Inform key FOs and NGOs about the GAFSP processes at the international level, CSO work within GAFSP, and status of GAFSP proposal of the government
* Get feedback from key FOs and NGOs about the GAFSP process and the agriculture situation in the country
* Get recommendations from key FOs and NGOs about CSO involvement in GAFSP at international and country levels
* Get the commitment of the government and the Supervising Entities to include FOs in the design, implementation and evaluation of the GAFSP project through institutionalized mechanisms

The Mission Team met 14 persons (10 men and 4 women) from two farmers’ organizations (NADF and AFLUT), one local NGO (Bonuvoni Kathlon), two government agencies (Plant Growing Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian University), and three intergovernmental organizations (WB, FAO, IFAD) (please see Annex A for highlights of individual meetings).

The consultation workshop, conducted last July 19, was attended by 20 people (14 men, 6 women) from government, NGO, farmers group, IGO and academe. In these meetings, an exchange of information and ideas about the GAFSP mission, the work of the CSO, the situation of farmers and agriculture in the country and thoughts on how to achieve agriculture development benefitting farmers transpired. During the consultation workshop, government representatives gave an overview and status of the GAFSP Project, while AFA gave an orientation on the CSO work within the frame of the GAFSP Steering Committee. Then, comments and recommendations on the GAFSP proposal were given and current work areas of CSOs were shared (please see Annex 2 for highlights of consultation workshop).

**Key Information Gathered**

1. **On the status of the GAFSP Project**
   1. A huge mission was conducted last April-May 2012. A general design of the project, almost similar to what has been submitted, with some slight changes is now being formulated and is targeted to be submitted in August 2012. The GAFSP project will be an extension and expansion of the Public Employment for Sustainable Agriculture and Water Resources Management Project (PAMP II).
   2. The GAFSP project/PAMP 2 will have two components. Component 1 is on public works for irrigation and drainage infrastructure renovation with a budget of US$22.5M, and will have three sub-components. The first sub component, with a budget of %5.6M, will involve cleaning of 4,100 kms of on-farm and minor low-order inter-farm irrigation canals, involving 18,000 beneficiaries, representing about 70% of the needed on-farm irrigation system rehabilitation work volume in the project area. The second sub-component, with a budget of USD13.9M, will involve mechanized works for cleaning of drains and larger higher-order inter-farm canals of about 990 kms of canals, as well as civil and electromechanical works for rehabilitation and restoration. The third sub-component is on flood channel emergency works of the Tebalia River, with a budget of USD3M.   
        
      Component 2 is on Institutional Strengthening in Water Sector, with a budget of USD3.5M, aimed to support the government’s efforts in implementing the water sector reform at all levels. At national, the support will be on further development of the legal basis for the water reforms and supporting the development of a new functional WRM system. At the river basin level, it will pilot a river basin management approach in Kafernigan river basin. At the local level, it will support the establishment of 20 new WUAs (plus 40 by complementary USAID project), and support to 33 existing WUAs.
2. **On the farmers and their organizations and support groups in Tajikistan** 
   1. The Mission Team met with two national farmers’ organizations namely the NADF and AFLUT, who also acted as local hosts of this project. NADF was established in 2005, much earlier than AFLUT which was established in 2011. It has membership in all agricultural districts of the country and has office centers in the major districts. The Mission Team visited its training center in Rudaki district, which is near Dushanbe capital. NADF has engaged various donors already on many training and advisory projects, in partnership with big donors such as JICA, EC and World Bank. Over the years, it has acquired some assets – offices and equipment, and has produced several manuals in Russian and Tajik languages. Inspite of this, NADF said that it is difficult for the organization to seek support from the government. AFLUT, on the other hand, is starting to mobilize resources and partner with various institutions to achieve its aims.
   2. Apparently, there is no national water user association, although there are WUAs in the districts. All those interviewed are saying that WUAs need to have stronger organizations at local and national levels, and their capacities for irrigation management have to be built. Farmers whom the Mission Team interviewed said that they receive very little support from government, and their training on crop management, for example, have been provided by partner NGOs.
   3. Farmers raised the concerns on access to credit, low yields, inability to pay water fees, increasing salinization of water, poor state of irrigation canals, high level of underground water, lack of pumping stations and equipment, lack of qualified people to manage water distribution and use. The poor state of the drainage system has led to too much soil erosion, leading to increased wetlands and reduced farmlands.
   4. Women are increasingly doing much (60-70%) of the farm work due to the migration of men farmers, mainly to Russia. Yet, they are unable to get involved in the project’s clean-up of the inter-farm irrigation canal as the men would return to do the job, and women needed to take care of the children.
3. **Feedback and Suggestions on the GAFSP project**
   1. All those who were interviewed (except those from WB) said that they have been made aware of the GAFSP project only during this mission. But when oriented on the proposal submitted by the government, they agreed that this is an important and timely project. Everyone shares the understanding that the Kathlon region should be the priority target area for rehabilitation work.
   2. The following suggestions for further improvement of the GAFSP project design were articulated during meetings and the consultation workshop:
      1. A stronger coordination between the Ministry of Agriculture who is in charge of food security and who is promoting crop diversification, and the Water Ministry who is providing the water source for the farmer.
      2. Build the capacities of WUAs for irrigation management, integrated water management, crop management, sustainable agriculture including diversification of crops, and independent, self –governance, including helping them buy the needed machineries, even if through credit.
      3. Provide social infrastructures (e.g. daycare, schools, equipment) so that women farmers get more involved in the project (and thus earn more in the process) and in the farmers’ organizations.
      4. In areas where there are dekhan farmers association and water user association, help farmers so they are able to define the roles of each association and coordinate their work properly.
      5. Study the possibility of having a pilot water reservoir in one of the target areas.

**Action Points**

1. At the time of this writing, the GAFSP implementation plan has been approved already by the Steering Committee. As the final details of the implementation plan are being worked out, it is recommended that the concerns and suggestions put forward here in this report be strongly considered.
2. The link between irrigation, agriculture and food and nutrition security has to be established, and one possible strategy to do this is to ensure that irrigation water reaches the farmers, especially the women farmers, and crops that are planted in the family farms are able to provide many of the nutrients that the family, especially the children, needs.
3. The NGOs who were present during the consultation workshop as well as the national farmers’ organizations and inter-governmental organizations FAO and IFAD have expressed interest to engage the government in the design and implementation of this GAFSP project. It is recommended that they are properly represented and significantly involved in the management and implementation structures (or steering committees) of the Project. It is possible that there are other NGOs whom the Mission Team has not reached. It will be good if the government, together with other NGOs, FAO and IFAD, can do an inventory or mapping of all those who work in the irrigation and health/nutrition sector, both at national and local levels, and include them in the implementation and monitoring of the project.

*Annex Highlights of Individual Meetings in Republic of Tajikistan*

*Annex B Highlights of Consultation WS held July 19, 2012*

*Annex C Program of the GAFSP CSO consultation workshop, July 19, 2012*



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