

Ministero degli Affari Esteri  
Direzione Generale  
per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo  
Il Direttore Generale

209/MS  
Roma, 30.07.99/006157

Dear Mr Diallo,

With reference to your letter of 25 June, 1999 (that we received on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July), I wish to inform you that in September 1998 the Italian Government approved the use of 600,000 US\$ in favour of IFAD, to provide assistance in the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification in Niger and Cape Verde.

This Italian contribution has been the most significant one among those specifically aimed at assisting local Governments of both countries in the elaboration process of the National Action Plans.

A mission of IFAD took place in Niger in March 1999, in order to: (i) analyse the NAP elaboration process and methodology, in relation also to the level of participation of civil society and local community in the elaborative phase. (ii) determine the needs for further assistance in the final achievement of the NAP at local level; (iii) identify possible activities that at IFAD could support (environmental policies, financial mechanisms) as well as pilot activities in the areas of intervention of ongoing projects financed by IFAD and (iv) prepare a detailed work plan and budget for IFAD support in the same field over a two-year period (1999-2000).

In Cape Verde a mission of IFAD took place in March 1999. Cape Verde was the first country in Africa to ratify the Convention and its NAP process is therefore considered as one of the most advanced in the region. The IFAD mission report, however, has highlighted some lacks concerning the integration among the different components of the Plan. This means that it is recommended: (i) to continue the international assistance activities during the elaboration process of the NAP; (ii) strengthen the local dimension of the NAP; (iii) develop local pilot activities to combat desertification as a pre-ambule to the full-scale implementation of wider developing programmes such as the Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme which is co-ordinated by IFAD.

Please accept, Mr. Diallo, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Min. Plen. Vincenzo Petrone)

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