Innovative Opportunities in Support of Sustainable Land Management

by

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Overview

To review and discuss a few innovative approaches that could be used to enhance the adoption of sustainable land management by stakeholders. Discussions will include a review of:

• The challenges faced by the region; and
• The opportunities available.

Challenges

• Exploitation of degraded and fragile land;

• Reliance on low-input, low-risk and low-output strategies;

• Farming employs the poorest;

• Low investments;

• High rural-urban drift especially among the youngest and brightest.
Challenges cont’d

• Need to break away from the above challenges through structural transformation;

• Need innovative opportunities that rely on market linkages, and that are flexible enough to adjust to global competition and trade rules.

Opportunities

• Enhancing markets and trade;

• Developing farm enterprises;

• Developing agro-tourism;

• Hedging against risk.
Enhancing markets and trade

• Improving market opportunities through improved linkage between producers, intermediaries and consumers;

• Emphasis on the development of local produces (zaatar, Arabic gum, dates, various fruits and vegetables, etc.);

• Processing for added value.

Markets and trade cont’d

• Impact would be great as these are produces grown by poor communities and on fragile land;

• Multiplier effect also if the crops/plants chosen are capable to improve the land (fixing the soil and nutrients, etc.).
Developing Farm Enterprises

- Needed to better link producers and consumers and possibly to add value;
- Would provide support to stakeholders including procurement and marketing while ensuring they get rewarded;
- Would have to overcome the usual problems faced by farm enterprises (free ride, lack of capital, risk avoidance, divergence of interests).

Farm Enterprises cont’d

Major characteristics:
- Closed and flexible memberships;
- Rights pegged to level of contributions;
- Concentration on market niche;
- STRONG EMPHASIS on providing significant benefits so they could invest even more in their productive assets including land.
Developing agro-tourism

• It is an activity that supports other activities on the farm;

• It is a fast growing business for rural communities in some countries;

• It plays a vital role in preserving the rural way of life and providing additional revenues while encouraging farmers to better take care of their lands.

Agro-tourism

• Needs concerted efforts to promote and finance it;

• Often carried out through public-private partnerships (municipalities, farmers, cooperatives, etc.);

• Needs appropriate laws, regulations and programs to support it.
Hedging against risk

• Prices of major agricultural commodities have been very volatile over the past few years;

• This volatility has hurt the rural and urban poor;

• Farmers have profited while prices went up but have since been hurt by rapidly declining prices.
Hedging

- Farmers need to protect their revenues by hedging their crops so as to reduce risk against adverse price movements, thereby allowing them to confidently invest in their productive assets;

- Appropriate assistance would be required to allow them to access the appropriate exchanges.
Conclusion

• Land degradation is a pressing issue but the adoption of control measures is not guaranteed;

• Stakeholders adopt land conservation practices and other sustainable practices only if offered appropriate incentives to do so.

Conclusion cont’d

• Land conservation practices are adopted because of the opportunity to increase income, and as such land conservation is a by-product;

• Appropriate institutions are required to enhance the process and to ensure that benefits accrue to grassroots communities.
Thank you!