
Closing statement by President Gilbert F. Houngbo

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Distinguished delegates and colleagues,

First and foremost, since this is my last statement to the Board, I would like to start by expressing my sincere thanks to the members for their constant support, and to IFAD staff for their outstanding work over the past years.

I would also like to thank the outgoing members of the Board – Mr Carlos Amaral of Angola, Mr Eduardo Rolim of Brazil, Ms Li Hongxia of China, Ms Manisha Sinha of India, and Ms Abigail Demopulos of the United States – for their valuable support and engagement.

It is also time to bid farewell to one of our colleagues. You have had frequent dealings with him in his role as Secretary of IFAD. After 12 years at IFAD, Mr Luis Jiménez-McInnis will move to take up the role of Director of the External Relations, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Department in the Pan American Health Organization. My best wishes for your future endeavours, Luis.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I appreciate your high level of engagement, feedback and guidance on IFAD's global food crisis response. We have taken note of your comments, especially on the need for coordination across initiatives, and Management will take them forward.

The rich dialogue on the budget has given Management a clear direction ahead and it will inform discussions at the forthcoming Audit Committee meeting in November, and the Board session in December.

Let me also reiterate that we need to rethink how IFAD should evolve. The role we want to give IFAD in the current global context is important and it must guide how we collectively map its trajectory.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend colleagues for their outstanding work. They have managed to do more with less – as per the conclusions of the ARIE and the RIDE – and the great majority of the IFAD11 targets have been surpassed.

The results of the IFAD11 Impact Assessment give credence to the work we have done together, and I cannot help but commend the team, and indeed all IFAD colleagues, for the rigour of the work done. I would like to make a passionate plea for a healthy budget allocation, including through supplementary fund contributions, to sustain this activity, as it will pave the way for IFAD among the multilateral institutions.

The upcoming borrowing agreement with the European Investment Bank and the framework that is developing around non-sovereign private sector collaboration show how IFAD is successfully leveraging new partnerships to further strengthen its catalytic role in transforming food systems.

As this institution looks ahead to IFAD13 – and I thank you for your approval of the composition of the IFAD13 Consultation – I cannot stress enough the critical importance of mobilizing more core contributions for IFAD's work.

We will need your help to convey the importance and effectiveness of IFAD's work to your governments at home, so that IFAD and its staff can do their part in reducing poverty, improving food security and contributing to the realization of food systems that are sustainable, inclusive and fair.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As I reflect on my time with this great institution, I am pleased with the work we have done and the results we have achieved together.

There is still a long way to go to achieve a world free of poverty and hunger. But I leave IFAD with a great sense of confidence in what it can achieve. IFAD's next leader, Alvaro Lario, knows IFAD well, believes in its mission and trusts its staff.

It has been a privilege to work with you all and to lead this institution in serving the rural poor. I thank you for your trust.

IFAD has taught me so much. It made me grow and it prepared me for the new role at the International Labour Organization. I assure you that during my time at ILO, I will continue the fight against abject poverty and inequality, and contribute to the work of realizing a just world.

With these words, it is my honour to close the 136th session of the Executive Board.

I wish you all the very best and look forward to meeting you on other occasions in the future.

Thank you.