



Investing in rural people

Executive Board

143rd Session

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Opening statement by President Alvaro Lario

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Excellencies,

Distinguished Friends,

Welcome to the 143rd session of IFAD's Executive Board.

Let me start by extending a special welcome to the newly accredited representative to our Executive Board for Peru – His Excellency Manuel José Antonio Cacho-Sousa Velázquez.

Welcome also to our silent observers from the Rome-based agencies, the European Union and all other delegates following our proceedings remotely or from the salle d'écoute.

I also take the opportunity to present some new members of the IFAD Management team:

- Ms Federica Diamanti, Associate Vice-President of the External Relations Department;
- Mr Roger Fischer, Director and Chief Risk Officer;
- Ms Pieterneel Boogaard, Managing Director of the Office of Technical Delivery;
- Ms Madina Bazarova, Director of the Office of Audit and Oversight;
- Ms Jenny Scharrer, Director of the Private Sector Operations Division;
- Ms Janet Muir, Director of the Procurement and Financial Management Division; and
- Mr Nigel Brett, Director of the Sustainable Production, Markets and Institutions Division, who was previously the Director of the Operational Policy and Results Division.

Distinguished Representatives,

Dear Colleagues,

It is always a pleasure and an honour to welcome you to Rome for our Board meetings.

As we gather today, I know at the back of many minds are the great changes happening in the world. The geopolitical ground is shifting under our feet.

So, I am looking forward to our discussions, especially on how we have been preparing the organization to push even harder to deliver positive impact for rural communities at the speed and scale they need.

Despite the world's changes, financing for rural development will remain crucial to any efforts to bring resilience and stability to poor communities and small-scale food producers.

As we look back on a successful IFAD12 delivery, we are proud that we are playing a role, affecting real change, and positively impacting the lives of millions of rural people in some of the most vulnerable places on earth.

And as we shift into a new project cycle, the entire organization is less centralized, more efficient, and more laser-focused on operations than ever before.

Chers collègues,

Nous sommes parvenus à atteindre nos cibles et à tenir nos engagements pour FIDA12, en dépit de la pandémie et de ses répercussions, des guerres en Ukraine, au Soudan, à Gaza, au Liban et ailleurs, et de la vague de chocs économiques, de filières perturbées, d'inflation et de bouleversements politiques qui s'en sont suivis.

J'aimerais m'arrêter un bref instant pour remercier l'ensemble des membres du personnel du FIDA, qui ont contribué, par leur remarquable travail, à la mise en œuvre de FIDA12 – c'est grâce à ce travail collectif que nous avons réalisé non moins de 99,5% de l'objectif global, fixé à 3,354 milliards de dollars.

Malgré toutes ces difficultés, nous avons persévéré, avec le soutien de nos États membres, qui pour FIDA13 ont répondu à l'appel et porté leurs engagements à un niveau sans précédent.

Cela témoigne d'un sentiment profondément ancré, et largement partagé, d'avoir en le FIDA une maison commune.

Solo la adopción de medidas concertadas, colectivas y coherentes nos permitirá lograr un futuro sostenible en el que nadie se quede atrás.

Es obvio que esta afirmación no implica que vayamos a invertir aún más para solucionar los viejos problemas. Nuestra orientación debe evolucionar para adaptarse a un panorama mundial en constante cambio.

Por eso, los planes que hemos acordado conjuntamente para la FIDA13 incluyen un modelo para que el FIDA no solo haga más, sino que lo haga mejor.

Esa es otra de las razones por las cuales el FIDA está finalizando su proceso de reajuste y de descentralización a tiempo para la ejecución de la FIDA13. Me complace especialmente informarles de que en el nuevo año abriremos nuestras oficinas regionales de América Latina y el Caribe y de Asia y el Pacífico.

Ambos procesos han sido concebidos para acercarnos más a los Gobiernos y a la población rural, y a la vez ser más eficientes, más ágiles y sistemáticos en nuestra colaboración con el sector privado. También me complace informarles de que se han completado con mínimas repercusiones presupuestarias.

IFAD13 will take learnings from the previous cycle and deliver more, and faster, to where it's needed most.

We will see strengthening of projects that incorporate gender and nutrition considerations. We will spend 60 per cent of our project funding in Africa, and at least 55 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa. And at least 45 per cent will be spent as climate finance in the countries and communities that need it most to adapt.

Colleagues,

This week, you will be invited to review and discuss some emerging aspects of a newer, fitter IFAD, re-tuned and ready for more ambitious delivery and operations.

The workplan of the Ethics Office is IFAD's first. Its output will strengthen our response and protection mechanisms, ensuring a safer and fairer workplace for all – and better outcomes for the people we serve.

We will discuss three new COSOPs. And we will look for your approval of the resources available for commitment in 2025 and update you on the country allocations for IFAD13, respectful of the targets requested, including 60 per cent of project funding to Africa.

Dear colleagues,

As we move into 2025 and IFAD13, we hope this week's discussions will showcase the work happening behind the scenes to prepare for IFAD's next programme of work. As we make this shift, we will rely ever more on three things: partnerships, perseverance and a deep sense of purpose.

First, as our primary partners, I want to thank all of our Board members and Member States again for your robust stewardship.

I want to congratulate especially both Brazil's G20 Presidency and Italy's G7 Presidency, who provided incredibly effective platforms to advocate for greater investment in rural development.

Next year we are looking forward to the opportunities afforded by Canada's G7 Presidency, and the G20 Presidency heading to Africa for the first time, as we continue our efforts to ensure small-scale producers remain the centre of the global fight against poverty, hunger and inequality.

Second, the current political dynamics and economic challenges mean that perseverance and unrelenting ambition must be at the centre of our next phase. I rely on you all to continue to hold us to account on these dimensions.

And third, our shared sense of purpose. It is both the vision of a better world that drives us, and the responsibility to get there as quickly, sustainably and efficiently as we can.

It is what drives us all here today, including IFAD staff.

All of us in this building and in offices across the world are grateful to you for sharing that sense of purpose. And we look forward to making it manifest over the next two days as we prepare to launch IFAD13 and our next steps toward that better future.

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