
Closing statement by President Alvaro Lario

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Distinguished delegates, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

As we conclude the 148th session of IFAD's Executive Board, I would like to thank all Board representatives for the openness, the quality and the strategic focus of today's discussions.

We met at an important moment. We are implementing the Thirteenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD13), shaping IFAD14 and preparing our programme of work for 2027, against a backdrop of increasing fragility, constrained fiscal space and growing expectations for the multilateral system.

Our strategic discussion on resilience in fragile contexts was therefore especially timely.

The message is clear. It is no longer a question of why IFAD should engage in fragile contexts but of how it should do so. During the discussions, you called for sharper choices when deciding where and how we engage, stronger evidence on results and costs, and more differentiated decision-making tailored to different contexts of fragility. Flexibility must go hand in hand with accountability.

Many of you emphasized prevention, preparedness and anticipatory action to protect livelihoods and development gains before they are lost. IFAD has an important role to play, firmly anchored in our development mandate and comparative advantage, while working in close complementarity with the Rome-based agencies and other partners across the humanitarian-development nexus.

You also called for stronger partnerships and a disciplined but impact-oriented approach to risk. This means accepting calculated risks where the case for development is strong, while remaining selective and financially responsible; strengthening the complementarity between sovereign and non-sovereign operations; and working from the outset with international financial institutions, local partners, the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, based on our respective comparative advantages.

As we look ahead, these lessons will be central to further strengthening IFAD's contribution in fragile settings under IFAD14.

Today's discussion on fragility was also part of a broader conversation about IFAD14.

The replenishment provides an opportunity to strengthen IFAD's ability to deliver in a more uncertain and demanding environment, while remaining anchored in our comparative advantage: investing at the first mile of food systems.

Several of you framed IFAD14 as a strategic opportunity: investing in food security and resilience where fragility is greatest is also an investment in stability. I share that view.

I welcome the constructive engagement of members since the first Consultation session. I look forward to continuing these discussions in October.

Thank you also for your consideration of the high-level preview of IFAD's 2027 programme of work and budgets, together with the work programme and budget of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE).

The year 2027 will be very important for IFAD. We must sustain strong implementation of IFAD13, prepare the organization for IFAD14, and continue strengthening the systems, skills and investments needed to deliver results at scale.

I heard strong support for continued budget discipline, together with a clear call for sharper prioritization. Efficiency must not come at the expense of delivery capacity, technical expertise or risk management, and our investments in people, digital tools and artificial intelligence should strengthen operational delivery.

You have also reaffirmed the importance of a strong and independent evaluation function, with learning feeding directly into operational decisions and IFAD14 preparation.

Management will ensure that your guidance informs the full programme of work and budget proposals to be presented later this year.

The Board's joint consideration of the 2026 Annual Report on the Independent Evaluation of IFAD (ARIE) and the 2026 Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE) has given us a valuable opportunity to examine performance from complementary perspectives.

The ARIE brings independent findings and lessons from evaluation. The RIDE presents Management's self-assessment of IFAD's performance in 2025, the first year of IFAD13, against the IFAD13 Results Management Framework.

Evidence matters when it informs decisions. We must use these findings to identify what is working, confront persistent constraints and improve the quality, speed and impact of delivery at country level.

I would like to thank the Evaluation Cooperation Group for the third external peer review of IFAD's evaluation function and acknowledge the contributions of IOE and Management.

A strong, independent and credible evaluation function is essential to accountability, institutional learning and the confidence of Member States and partners.

Independence and use must reinforce one another. Evaluation must present rigorous challenge. The findings and recommendations must also be timely, accessible and applied to improve strategy, operations and results.

We will consider the review's recommendations carefully and continue constructive collaboration among the Board, IOE and Management, with full respect for our distinct roles.

Before I close, I would like to recognize Mr Mohamed Sawy, who has served as the Executive Board representative for Egypt since 2025. Mr Sawy participated actively in numerous governing body meetings, including sessions of the Executive Board and Evaluation Committee, as well as informal seminars, providing invaluable contributions and ongoing support to the Fund.

I would also like to acknowledge Mr Shindo Mitsuaki, Executive Board representative for Japan since 2023, who also acted as List A Co-Convenor between 2023 and 2024. Mr Shindo was also an active participant in our Executive Board sessions and other governing bodies, such as the Governing Council and the replenishment consultations.

I sincerely appreciate the contributions of these representatives over the years and wish them well in their new endeavours.

Let me also thank – as always – the Secretary of IFAD, the Office of the Secretary, the interpreters, conference services, technical teams, IOE and colleagues across IFAD who supported this session.

Today's discussions have linked strategy, resources, evidence and institutional capability. That is the discipline we need as we deliver IFAD13 and shape IFAD14.

Above all, we need to remain focused on investing in rural people, as the central agents of change. Their enterprise, knowledge and resilience are essential to food security, economic opportunity and stability.

Thank you all once again for your guidance and your support. I look forward to continuing our discussion at the second IFAD14 Consultation in October.

Thank you for your attention.