

# Meeting with Permanent Representatives

Statement by IFAD President  
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IFAD HQ  
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Excellencies,  
Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I would like to warmly welcome you to IFAD.

Today, our discussion will centre on the critical issue of fragile states. As always, we are here to inform you of what we are doing and what our thoughts are for the future. More importantly, we are also here to get your feedback.

2. In a few minutes, you will get an in-depth presentation from some of our Country Programme Managers about the work they are doing, the progress they have made and the challenges they face on the ground. But first, I would like to give you an overview of how IFAD sees its work in fragile and conflict afflicted states.

3. Why do we work in these areas? Because IFAD's mandate is to reduce rural poverty and hunger, and there is a clear link between fragility, conflict and poverty. Because these areas are disproportionately affected by climate change. And because what happens in fragile states affects all of us. As I have said before, our world is global. What happens in Timbuktu or Agadez is felt in Paris, London and Rome.
4. Today, IFAD is supporting programmes and projects in 54 fragile states. More than \$6 billion, or about 42 per cent of IFAD's active portfolio, is dedicated to work in fragile states.
5. As their name implies, fragile states are not easy places to work. They often lack infrastructure, or are plagued by conflict. In Yemen, for example, there have been long periods when it has simply been too dangerous for country staff to make the journey to get to project areas.

6. And because IFAD works where others do not – or continues to work in areas, such as Mali, long after other partners have left – we do not benefit from being able to share resources and costs with other development partners in many of the areas where we work.
7. This is the reality, and in the presentation we will elaborate on what it means for IFAD's portfolio performance.
8. But we know that we will never achieve a world without poverty and hunger, unless we continue to work in these areas and convince others of the need to also invest in them.
9. With this in mind, during IFAD8 and 9 we deepened our commitment to fragile states, invested in analytical work and knowledge management and increased our country presence.
10. We are also increasing collaboration with the other Rome-based agencies. We jointly support the work of the Committee on World

Food Security (CFS), particularly its work on an agenda for action for food security in protracted crises.

11. To improve the capacity of fragile states to plan, manage and implement IFAD-supported agricultural programmes we recently partnered with FAO by investing \$2 million of our grant resources to provide support for capacity development. And at the country level, there continue to be many other areas of joint activities, collaboration and coordination.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

12. In our line of work, we often talk about “challenges and opportunities”. The challenges of working in development in fragile states are not to be underestimated. They are many – as you will hear from my colleagues. But neither must we underestimate the opportunities to end human suffering and provide dignified livelihoods.

13. Today, we will be listening to presentations by two of IFAD's Country Program Managers who work in fragile states, Mr AbdelKarim Sma and Mr Hubert Boirard. They will be speaking to you about their challenging, but very rewarding work, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Egypt and Sierra Leone.
14. We will then open the floor for your questions and comments.
15. Thank you for your kind attention.