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**STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRPERSON,
MR JAMES HARVEY,
CLOSING THE THIRTIETH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**

Mr President,
Distinguished Governors and Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The time has come to draw the thirtieth session of the Governing Council to a close. This session will remain in our memories thanks to the presence of many distinguished guests and the opportunity it provided for the Governors of the Fund to interact, to see what IFAD has done over the past year and what it intends to do in the future.

The inaugural address by Her Excellency Luísa Dias Diogo, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mozambique, set the tone for the deliberations of the Council. The appreciation she expressed for IFAD's activities in Mozambique was encouraging. Through projects and programmes which promote rural financial services, market linkages, infrastructure development, artisanal fisheries, and agricultural and food security and through its active participation in policy dialogue, IFAD has contributed significantly to improving the lives of the rural poor in Mozambique. Providing concrete examples of results achieved in her own country, the Prime Minister's statement underlined the potential of the integrated and harmonized approach called for in the report of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence. Country ownership and commitment supported by complementary stakeholder interventions is the most effective way forward if we are to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

These Goals were also central to the statement delivered by His Excellency Tommaso Padoa Schioppa, Minister for Economy and Finance of the Italian Republic. He echoed the words of the Prime Minister of Mozambique in calling for coordinated and effective international cooperation and increased efforts in implementing the ongoing United Nations reform agenda. Representing the host country of the three Rome-based food and agriculture agencies of the United Nations, he urged for every effort to be made to further enhance the existing collaboration between FAO, WFP and IFAD. Italy has long played an active role in development and recognizes the fundamental role of IFAD in the fight against hunger and poverty. In this context, IFAD has consistently benefited from the generous support of its host country – support which was reconfirmed by Minister Padoa Schioppa's confirmation of Italy's contribution to the Seventh Replenishment of EUR 41.5 million.

The common thread running through these statements was clear – a collective effort and true partnership is fundamental to the success of any endeavour.

And partnership was the principal theme of the message that His Excellency Abdul Rahman H. al-Attiyah, Secretary-General of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, shared with the Council. He called on us, individually and together, to accept our responsibilities and to strive to live up to the commitments we have made to improve the lives of the poor.

Representing one of IFAD's strongest partners in rural development, His Excellency Suleiman J. al-Herbish, Director-General of the OPEC Fund for International Development, recalled that poverty is predominantly a rural phenomenon. As such, he highlighted the undeniable link between rural poverty and the attainment of the MDGs. Once again, with examples of successful joint initiatives undertaken with IFAD, the importance of partnership and collaboration was stressed.

The Council welcomed the message from His Excellency Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations. His statement reiterated the importance of rural and agricultural development, which is so important for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. He stressed his commitment to uphold the momentum for UN reform so as to continue building a UN system that is coherent, effective and efficient. He highlighted that IFAD's contribution, through its projects and programmes, and through the sharing of knowledge and lessons learned, is central to the global effort to end poverty and hunger.

President Bâge's statement to the Council this year was eloquent and forceful, underlining the tangible results achieved by the Fund over the past year. Overall performance has risen significantly, and a 10 per cent increase in the programme of work was achieved reaching millions more rural poor people. Having served on the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence, President Bâge stressed his commitment for the United Nations to "deliver as one, in true partnership and serving the needs of all countries".

We were introduced to the new senior management team, who will assist President Bâge in reaching this objective, and I am sure I speak on behalf of all those present in wishing the President and his team every success.

IFAD's commitment is shared by its sister agencies in Rome, and the Council welcomed the examples of partnership in action, in the messages from Dr Jacques Diouf, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and Mr James Morris, Executive Director of the World Food Programme.

The statements delivered by the Fund's Governors, covering various realities and geographic regions, emphasized their support for the important work being carried out by our Fund. They also reminded us of the huge global challenges faced by the development community at large, such as getting further progress on trade reform and tackling climate change. "Enabling the rural poor to overcome poverty" is not just IFAD's mission, it is our collective mission, as the Governors of many Member States of the Fund stressed.

The Council considered the report on the Seventh Replenishment of IFAD's Resources. At our last session, the Council received the good news of the rapid conclusion of the negotiations for the Seventh Replenishment and this session received further good news – that of the replenishment's effectiveness. This is a tangible and welcome demonstration of the importance IFAD's Member States ascribe to the Fund's mandate and to providing it with the resources necessary to continue its work. Pledges now total US\$616 million, or 86 per cent of the target of US\$720 million, and instruments of contribution received represent 58 per cent of the total pledges. Member States that have yet to announce their pledges, deposit their instruments of contribution or make their payments are urged to take the necessary action.

At the recommendation of the Executive Board, the Council approved IFAD's audited financial statements for 2005 and the administrative budget of IFAD for 2007 in the amount of US\$67.49 million. The records of this session will note the abstention of the United States of America on the Fund's administrative budget. The Council also approved an administrative budget for the Office of Evaluation of US\$5.687 million.

At last year's session of the Council, the composition of List B countries elected to the Executive Board was elected for a one-year term. Governors were informed of the List's intention to confirm this composition for the second and third years of the term of office of the Board and the four members and four alternate members were duly appointed. I take this opportunity once again to congratulate the List B membership of the Board and to wish them, and indeed the Board as a whole, every success in their work.

The Council was provided with a report on the implementation of the performance-based allocation system and noted the revisions made to the PBAS methodology which had been applied to the calculation of the 2006 country scores and the resulting allocations. Governors welcomed the news that IFAD would host the annual technical meeting in 2008 of those agencies implementing PBAS approaches. This meeting should provide a forum for the sharing of experiences and lessons learned, in the true spirit of harmonization.

The International Land Coalition provided a progress report on its efforts to promote a pro-poor land agenda aimed at ensuring that the rural poor have access to the assets necessary to overcome poverty on a sustainable basis. The Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification also reported to the Council on its operational activities in 2006, the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, outlining its evolving role as an institution which provides specialized advisory services on development, agriculture and the rehabilitation of natural resources. As such, the Global Mechanism becomes more and more a natural partner of IFAD.

Distinguished delegates,

Before closing this session, I would like to say a word of thanks - to all my fellow Governors - for the support you have afforded myself and my colleagues on the Bureau, the Governors for Qatar and Bangladesh, in conducting this session of the Council. I would be remiss if I were not to express appreciation also to the President of IFAD, for his effective management of the Fund. And, last, but by no means least, thank you to the staff of IFAD. The success of this Council would not have been possible without the tireless work of those behind the scenes - the interpreters, technical staff and conference messengers, to name but a few. The example they set of the power of teamwork, collaboration and harmonization is commendable.

On this note, I hereby close the thirtieth session of the Governing Council.