

**STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRPERSON,  
HIS EXCELLENCY LUC OYOUBI,  
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK, FISHERIES AND FOOD SECURITY  
OF THE GABONESE REPUBLIC  
CLOSING THE THIRTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**

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

We now come to the end of this, the thirty-seventh session of the Governing Council of IFAD. I believe we can all look back on an extremely productive session.

This Council marks the beginning of the consultations on the Tenth Replenishment of IFAD's resources. Against the backdrop of the ongoing Post-2015 Development Agenda discussions and the International Year of Family Farming, it is clear that IFAD's goal of empowering rural women and men in developing countries to achieve higher incomes and improved food security, has never been more timely, and never been more critical.

The remarks made by our distinguished guests reflect this fact. At the inaugural ceremony, we were privileged to listen to His Excellency Fabrizio Saccomanni, Minister for Economy and Finance of the Italian Republic. The Minister addressed to the effects of the global financial crisis and stressed the need to invest in human capital to enhance food security and improve climate resilience. Recognizing the relevance of IFAD's mandate, as underlined by this year's celebration of family farming, Minister Saccomanni noted that one could well see this international year of Family Farming as the international year of IFAD.

The Council welcomed the message of the Secretary General of the Cooperation Council of the Arab States of the Gulf, delivered on his behalf by Mr Abdullah Jummah Alshibly, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Affairs, which highlighted the key importance of family farming and investment in agriculture as a means of transforming rural communities and stressed the role played by women in eradicating hunger and promoting development.

President Nwanze's statement to the Council was both thought-provoking and compelling. The President illustrated that IFAD's mandate not only remains relevant, but is increasingly vital. As the President pointed out, IFAD has kept pace with the times, increasing the number country offices, undertaking direct supervision and implementation support, scaling up successful projects, and significantly expanding its role in policy dialogue. The President highlighted his vision for IFAD's role in mobilizing partnerships to increase agricultural investment, and challenged us to redouble our individual and collective efforts on behalf of rural people.

Let us join with the Fund in ensuring that the voice of the smallholders is heard far and wide. In this plenary hall we heard the voices of 6 smallholders whose lives have been transformed through IFAD's activities in their countries. They called upon IFAD to ensure that farmers like themselves were provided with access to finance, access to infrastructure and markets, that land tenure rights be strengthened, and that training and education for farmers be expanded. These same issues were raised during the Governors Round Table where, united in diversity, Governors representing virtually every geographic and cultural background spoke as one in recognizing the centrality of smallholder family farming to achieving the future we want.

In the statement of the fifth global meeting of the Farmers' Forum presented to the Council, participants called on Governments to support IFAD as a key partner and advocate for smallholder farmers. Partnerships with the private sector must also be leveraged and the mutually beneficial relationship between big business and small farmers should be fostered as highlighted by the Private Sector Panel held this morning

Distinguished Governors,

At this 37<sup>th</sup> Governing Council we had the pleasure of welcoming the Russian Federation into the IFAD fold, expanding to 173 the number of IFAD member states.

The Council approved the Establishment of the Consultation on the Tenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources and the Establishment of the special expenditure budget for IFAD replenishment exercises.

The Council further reviewed IFAD's 2014 results-based programme of work and regular and capital budgets, the IOE results-based work programme and budget for 2013 and

indicative plan for 2015-2016, and the HIPC and PBAS progress reports, approving the budgets of IFAD and its Independent Office of Evaluation.

The Report on the Ninth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources, the Final report on the special expenditure for reform actualization and the Report on IFAD's Hosting of the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD were noted.

I would like to express my personal gratitude to each of you, and to my colleagues on the Bureau. I am sure I speak on their behalf as well, when I thank you for the trust you have invested in the Governing Council Bureau. Our thanks go as well to the staff of IFAD, whose expertise in planning and organizing this conference is truly commendable, and a special word of thanks goes out to the interpreters, the technical staff and, of course, the conference messengers. The efficiency, thorough organization, and professionalism demonstrated by all have been exemplary, and have ensured the success of this session.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we close this Governing Council, we embark on the IFAD10 replenishment consultation. We are all resolutely aware of the challenges facing economies worldwide, and in developing nations in particular. As Member States consider how we can ensure that IFAD can act as an effective advocate and agent of change, let rural people be at heart of each deliberation, each decision. Collectively, and united with IFAD, we can, we must, make a difference.

I am sure that I speak on behalf of all distinguished Governors when I express our support for President Nwanze and his team. In addressing the challenges facing the nearly 850 million poor people in the world, IFAD has the unwavering support of its entire membership. IFAD's strength lies in its membership, in our joint commitment and ability to transcend geographic and cultural boundaries, to encompass both donor and recipient countries in the Fund's structures and processes. Transforming merely meeting the vital needs of the day into sustainably improving the lives of people and communities for the future, cannot be accomplished without investing; investing in communities, investing in jobs, investing in agriculture, investing in rural people.

On this note, I hereby declare the thirty-seventh session of the Governing Council closed.