



Investing in rural people

Closing remarks by the Chairperson of the Governing Council

Thank you very much, Mr President, for your closing remarks. We join you in your fight not only to achieve our shared Sustainable Development Goals, especially to end poverty, but also in your fight for the dignity of rural poor people.

As we come to the end of our time together, I would like to thank you all for having participated in this forty-first session of the IFAD Governing Council and for your contributions, questions, remarks and active engagement.

Your contributions throughout the session were not only highly appreciated but also very much needed. I am sure that the President, Management and staff have taken note of the comments and concerns raised, and will take the necessary action to address them.

I am still very much impressed by our two special guests from yesterday. Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, shared clear messages about the importance of investing in rural people – which means investing in agriculture – as one of the ways to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Listening to her personal experience and her determination to fight for democracy and for sustainably ending poverty in her country was inspiring. She has now installed an ambitious programme with a target of making Bangladesh a middle-income country within a couple of years, and a developed country in the near future. She has also introduced innovations in financing.

The Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation from the Republic of Peru, His Excellency José Berley Arista Arbildo, in his message, highlighted the challenge of climate change and the consequences on distress migration and economies if it is not addressed. He also reiterated his faith in investing in rural people, climate change resilience, agriculture and the conservation of biodiversity because these should all go hand in hand. He shared the results Peru is achieving in reducing poverty in cities, and the need to work in partnership with organizations like IFAD to reduce poverty in rural areas.

The messages we got back from the interactive sessions made it clear that rural development is not only about agriculture; it is very much related to all the major issues with which we are confronted in the United Nations system, including poverty and distress migration. That is what I take away from the interactive sessions and perhaps it carries a message for the future: how do we translate this into action for IFAD? We need to think about how we can translate the outcomes and messages of the interactive sessions into our work, our actions and our decisions. It is also clear that investing in rural development means investing in dealing with the root causes of conflict – climate change and migration – which are also the major issues facing the whole United Nations system. So the solution is here in Rome, especially with IFAD, but it has to be a joint effort.

As stated by Dr Olusegun Obasanjo, excellent national governments and good governance are a prerequisite for successful rural development. Strong institutions must be in place, because only then will it be possible to work with organizations like IFAD, and to forge the needed partnerships with the private sector, with companies that can invest in rural people, especially youth.

Another key message from this session is that we also have to invest in data. Sometimes we think we know what the problem is but are surprised to find out that we do not know enough. We must have the data so that we have a clear grasp of the problems and can thus find the solutions. Clearly there is no one solution that fits all, hence the need to be country-specific.

We always speak about technology transfer and training people, but we need to listen to and understand the people on the ground as well, so that we can work with them to find suitable solutions.

A compelling case for why we should continue to support IFAD and why IFAD is, indeed, a treasured institution at this point in time, has been made throughout this session.

We covered quite a lot of business during this session. The Governing Council took note of the Report on the Tenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources and considered the following items, approving and adopting the relevant recommendations and resolutions:

- Consolidated financial statements of IFAD in 2016;
- Amendments to the Policies and Criteria for IFAD Financing;
- IFAD's 2018 results-based programme of work and regular and capital budgets, the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD's results-based work programme and budget for 2018 and indicative plan for 2019-2020, and the HIPC and PBAS progress reports;
- Review of the adequacy of the level of the General Reserve;
- Amendment to the Agreement Establishing IFAD;
- Proposal for the revision of the established good practice for the process leading to future appointments of the President of IFAD; and
- Report of the Consultation on the Eleventh Replenishment of IFAD's Resources, including its resolutions and the addendum to the report reflecting that the Consultation endorsed an IFAD11 programme of loans and grants target of US\$3.5 billion, and a replenishment target of US\$1.2 billion. Your strong support to IFAD as evidenced in your pledges to IFAD11 is a positive signal of the membership's commitment to the institution and its goals and ambition to achieve greater results as it invests in rural people.

In addition, the Council elected 18 new members and alternate members of the Executive Board for the three-year term of office from 2018 to 2020. Allow me to congratulate the incoming representatives. We look forward to their dedicated leadership and we thank the outgoing representatives and alternates for their strong commitment and guidance provided.

This session of the Governing Council was designed to ensure active involvement by all Governors. The interactive sessions were designed to that end, and I think they have proved to be an excellent approach. This is a good starting point for even more interactive approaches and certainly also a youth council in the future.

All of the sessions, the interactive sessions, the decisions you have taken and the videos you have seen clearly show how important IFAD's work is for our future, for our fight against poverty, for our fight to achieve the elimination of hunger by 2030. Once again, many, many thanks. We applaud you for what you have done during these two days, for what you have done in the past and for what you are going to do in the future.

Distinguished delegates,

I will conclude now and here I will depart from my text because I have many people to thank. Let me begin by thanking the people behind the scenes, the invisible people – they are invisible because we never see them here in the room, although we see them in the corridors and appreciate their support; for example, the protocol, ICT and security staff who made sure that we could hold these meetings in very positive surroundings. We thank you so much with our applause.

Let me thank you all once more, together with my colleagues on the Bureau and the former Bureau. As the Bureau we thank you for the trust you placed in us to chair this Governing Council and work with you to make this session a success. Also, many, many thanks to the President, the Vice-President, Management and all IFAD staff, both here in

Rome and especially those working in the countries, often in very difficult circumstances. They need our support and appreciation. Thank you so much.

A special word of thanks goes to the Officer-in-Charge of the Office of the Secretary, Mr Bill Skinner, and his staff, the moderators, the staff in the room and, of course, the interpreters for doing an excellent job – we had no intervention that was not interpreted, so thank you very much for your excellent work. Thanks also to the technical staff, the system worked so well; and, of course, I would like to thank the conference messengers, they always smiled when we asked them the most difficult or impossible questions, thank you so much for your hard work. A big applause for all of them.

Distinguished Governors, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, friends: we can now look back on a very successful session. The message is clear: it is time to act. Never has the statue that stands in front of the United Nations headquarters in New York been more relevant than today: swords into ploughshares, words into action!

I hereby declare the forty-first session of the Governing Council closed.