

30 November 2020

Distinguished Governor,

On behalf of the President of IFAD, I have the honour to refer to article 6.8(a) of the Agreement Establishing IFAD regarding the appointment of the President of IFAD by the Governing Council.

At its fortieth session (14-15 February 2017), the Governing Council decided to appoint Mr Gilbert F. Houngbo as President of IFAD for a for a four-year term of office that ends on 31 March 2021. It is therefore incumbent upon the Governing Council, at its forty-fourth session, to consider the appointment of the President of IFAD.

The procedure for the nomination of candidates for President is set out in section 6.2 of the By-laws for the Conduct of the Business of IFAD ("the By-laws"), and was communicated to you on 17 September 2020. This section specifies that such nominations shall be submitted no less than 60 days before the opening of the session at which the appointment of the President is to be decided. Nominations shall be communicated to all Member States of IFAD and to the Bureau of the Governing Council no less than 40 days prior to the session of the Council.

In this context, and considering that the forty-fourth session of the Governing Council will be held from 17 to 18 February 2021, the deadline set in the communication for the submission of nominations elapsed on 23 November 2020.

I wish to inform you that IFAD has received one nomination for the position of President of IFAD:

- Mr Gilbert Fossoun **Houngbo** is the official candidate nominated by the Togolese Republic and by Canada.

A copy of the letters of nomination from countries, together with the curriculum vitae of the nominee and his answers to the questions to candidates, are attached. This letter and its attachment may also be viewed on IFAD's Member States Interactive Platform at this [link](#).

The Governing Council will take up the appointment of the President of IFAD under item 7 of its provisional agenda, which will be posted shortly.

Accept, Distinguished Governor, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Luis Jiménez-McInnis
Secretary of IFAD

Governors of the International
Fund for Agricultural Development
and respective recipients
of copies for information

Attachment
(Original in French)

Republic of Togo
Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Rural Development
Office of the Minister and Governor for IFAD

Lomé, 29 October 2020

No. 0139/MAEDR/Cab

Re: Nomination of Mr Gilbert Fossoun Hougbo for the office of President of IFAD

Dear Mr Secretary,

I refer to your communication of 17 September 2020 regarding the procedure for appointment of the President of IFAD by the Governing Council, planned for 17 and 18 February 2021.

On behalf of the Government of Togo, and in my capacity as Governor for IFAD, I am pleased to inform you of the Government's decision to nominate Mr Gilbert Fossoun Hougbo, current President of IFAD, for the office of President for a second term, in accordance with the prevailing rules and regulations.

In our opinion, Mr Hougbo has, during the course of his first term, clearly demonstrated his leadership qualities as a man of action and results. A second term would enable him to bring to fruition all of the initiatives he has undertaken since he took up his duties and help elevate the institution to new heights.

Enclosed herewith is Mr Hougbo's personal statement and response to the five questions posed to the candidates.

We would ask that you kindly acknowledge receipt of this nomination by Togo.

Highest consideration,

/s/
Antoine Lekpa Gbégbéni
[seal – Office of the Minister]

Mr Luis Jiménez-McInnis
Secretary of IFAD
Rome, Italy



REPUBLIQUE TOGOLAISE
MINISTRE DE L'AGRICULTURE, DE L'ELEVAGE
ET DU DEVELOPPEMENT RURAL

N° 0139 /MAEDR/Cab

Lomé, le 29 OCT 2020

Le Ministre

Gouverneur du FIDA

Objet: Candidature de M. Gilbert Fossoun HOUNGBO au poste de Président du FIDA

Monsieur le Secrétaire,

J'ai l'honneur de me référer à votre correspondance du 17 Septembre 2020 relative au processus de nomination du Président du FIDA par le Conseil des Gouverneurs prévu pour les 17 et 18 Février 2021.

Au nom du gouvernement togolais, et en ma qualité de Gouverneur du FIDA, j'ai le plaisir de vous informer de la décision du Gouvernement de présenter la candidature de **M. Gilbert Fossoun HOUNGBO**, Président actuel du FIDA, au poste de Président du FIDA pour un second mandat, et ce, conformément aux textes en vigueur.

Il est de notre avis que M. HOUNGBO, au cours de son premier mandat, a démontré sans ambages, ses qualités de leadership, d'homme d'actions et de résultats. Un deuxième mandat lui permettra de porter à terme toutes les initiatives entreprises depuis sa prise de fonction et de contribuer à hisser cette noble Institution à de nouvelles hauteurs.

Je vous prie de trouver en annexes la déclaration personnelle du candidat HOUNGBO ainsi que la réponse aux cinq questions posées aux candidats.

Tout en vous priant d'accuser réception du présent dossier de candidature du Togo, je vous prie d'agrèer, **Monsieur le Secrétaire**, l'assurance de ma parfaite considération.


Antoine Lekpa GBEBENI

Monsieur Luis Jiménez-McInnis
Secrétaire du FIDA

Rome, Italie

Attachment
(Original in French)

Global Affairs Canada

Mr Luis Jiménez-McInnis
Secretary of IFAD

Ottawa, 23 November 2020

Re: Nomination of Mr Gilbert F. Houngbo to the office of President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Dear Mr Secretary,

I refer to your communication of 17 September 2020 regarding the procedure for appointment of the President of IFAD by the Governing Council, planned for 17 and 18 February 2021.

On behalf of the Government of Canada, and in my capacity as Governor for IFAD, I am pleased to inform you of the Government's decision to nominate Mr Gilbert Fossoun Houngbo – IFAD's current President – for the office of President of IFAD for a second term, in accordance with the prevailing rules and regulations.

Mr Houngbo has, during the course of his first term, clearly demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities and a deep commitment to the objectives of the Fund. He has led the implementation of major reforms to ensure the continued effectiveness and sustainability of the institution, upholding excellence in management and building human resources capacity to respond to the organization's evolving needs and promote a diversified and inclusive working environment. A second term would enable him to make further strides on the important initiatives he has undertaken, and to ensure that IFAD is well positioned to transform rural communities and bring sustainable benefits to the highly vulnerable people who live in them.

Enclosed herewith is Mr Houngbo's curriculum vitae and responses to the five questions posed to the candidates.

We would ask that you kindly acknowledge receipt of this nomination of Mr Houngbo.

Highest consideration,

/s/

Peter MacDougall

Assistant Deputy Minister, Global Affairs and Development

Peter.MacDougall@international.gc.ca

Cc: Ambassador Alexandra Bugailiskis, Alternate Governor and Permanent Representative of Canada to the Food and Agriculture Agencies of the United Nations



Monsieur Luis Jiménez-McInnis
Secrétaire du FIDA

Ottawa, le 23 novembre 2020

Objet: Candidature de Mr Gilbert F. HOUNGBO au poste de Président du Fonds international de développement agricole (FIDA)

Monsieur le Secrétaire,

J'ai l'honneur de me référer à votre correspondance du 17 Septembre 2020 relative au processus de nomination du Président du FIDA par le Conseil des Gouverneurs prévu pour les 17 et 18 Février 2021.

Au nom du Gouvernement Canadien, et en ma qualité de Gouverneur du FIDA, j'ai le plaisir de vous informer de la décision de mon Gouvernement de présenter la candidature de Mr Gilbert Fossoun HOUNGBO – Président actuel du FIDA- au poste de Président du FIDA pour un second mandat, et ce, conformément aux textes en vigueur.

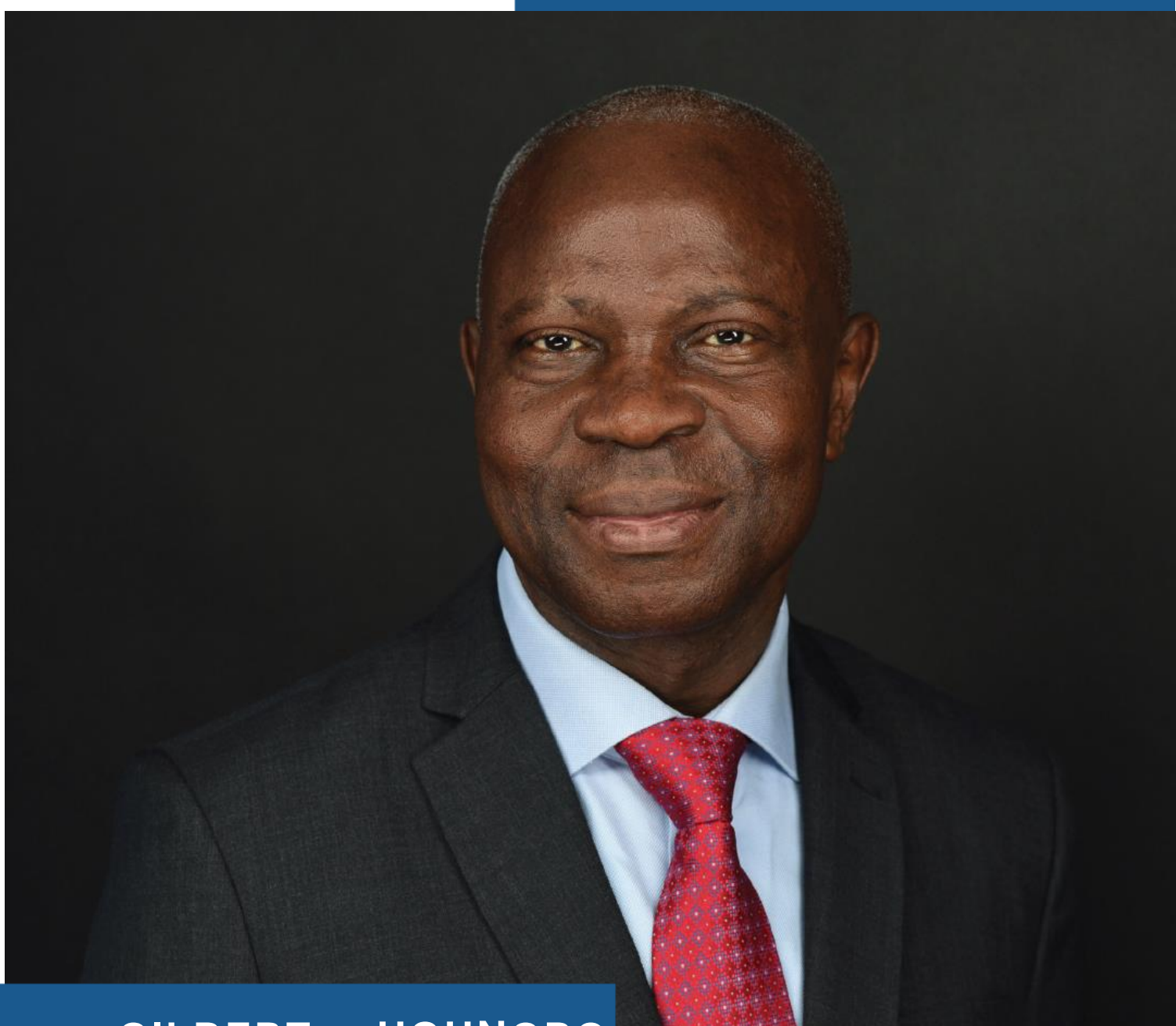
M. HOUNGBO, au cours de son premier mandat, a clairement démontré des qualités de leadership exceptionnelles et un engagement profond envers les objectifs du Fonds, dirigeant la mise en œuvre de réformes importantes pour assurer l'efficacité et la durabilité continues de l'institution, soutenant l'excellence de la gestion et le renforcement des capacités des ressources humaines pour répondre aux besoins évolutifs de l'organisation et assurer la promotion d'un milieu de travail diversifié et inclusif. Un deuxième mandat lui permettra de faire progresser les initiatives importantes qu'il a entreprises et de garantir que le FIDA sera en mesure de transformer les communautés rurales et d'obtenir des avantages durables pour les populations les plus vulnérables qui y vivent.

Je vous prie de trouver en annexe le CV du candidat HOUNGBO ainsi que ses réponses aux cinq questions posées aux candidats.

Tout en vous priant d'accuser réception du présent dossier de candidature de Mr. HOUNGBO, je vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur le Secrétaire, l'assurance de ma parfaite considération.

Peter MacDougall
Sous-ministre adjoint
Direction générale des enjeux mondiaux et développement
Peter.MacDougall@international.gc.ca
111 promenade Sussex
Ottawa, ON, K1N 1J1

Cc : S.E. Amb. Alexandra Bugailiskis, Gouverneur suppléant et Représentante permanente du Canada auprès des Agences pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture de l'ONU



GILBERT F. HOUNGBO

Candidate for the post of President of International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD)

BIO GILBERT F. HOUNGBO

A seasoned executive with a track record of more than 34 years in the field of international development. High-level leadership experience in the private sector, an LIC government, the United Nations and International Financial Institutions. A skilled political negotiator and a determined driver of institutional reforms, organizational restructuring, achieving efficiency gains and conducting successful policy reforms.

Key positions held

- ◆ President of IFAD
- ◆ Deputy Director-General, International Labor Organization (ILO), Field Operations and Partnerships
- ◆ Prime Minister of Togo
- ◆ Assistant Secretary General, United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Africa
- ◆ Chief of Staff of UNDP's Administrator
- ◆ Comptroller & Director of Finance & Administration, UNDP
- ◆ Manager, Financial Advisory Services, Price Waterhouse (now PwC) Canada

PRESIDENT OF INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (IFAD), APRIL 2017-PRESENT

- ◆ Leads the overall business of IFAD; accountable to the Board of Directors and the Governing Council
- ◆ Concessional lending investments in 100+ countries
- ◆ Inclusive investment in rural economies and food systems
- ◆ Private Sector window
- ◆ Debt & Equity investment in private sector corporations
- ◆ Chair of the Board of Directors

DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION (ILO), 2013- 2017

- ◆ Led the Organization's field operations in more than 100 countries
- ◆ Coordination of the Restructuring of the ILO's field presence
- ◆ Technical cooperation: Occupational safety and health, SME promotion, formalization of the informal sector, labor standards, social protection and inclusive economic growth;
- ◆ Special initiatives with multinational companies in South-East Asia And in the Middle-East

PRIME MINISTER OF TOGO, 2008-2012

- ◆ Led the government in a post-conflict context
- ◆ Negotiated the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) program
- ◆ Economic reforms: Fiscal reforms, Investment code, Transparency initiative, business facilitation, reforms for better ranking by the World Bank "Doing Business" report, privatization of state-owned enterprises

- ◆ Political reforms: Rule of law and civil liberties, coalition government with the Opposition and the civil society,
- ◆ Accountability and result based management
- ◆ Post HIPC strategic investment: Infrastructure and Agriculture
- ◆ Social sectors (education, health, water & sanitation, social protection)

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP), 1996-2008

- ◆ Assistant Secretary General, Director of UNDP Africa (2006-2008)
 - Led UNDP poverty alleviation programs in Sub-Saharan Africa with offices in 45 countries
 - Member of UNDP Executive Group
 - Political representation
- ◆ Chief of Staff (2003-2006)
- ◆ Comptroller & Director of Finance & Administration (1998-2003)
 - UNDP financial fiduciary and compliance responsibilities and reporting
 - Directed all accounting, treasury and administrative functions (HQ and 160 field offices)
 - Implementation of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)
 - Internal controls and risks
- ◆ Head of financial reporting and trust fund management (1996-98)

Banque Internationale du Mali: Director of Finance, 1994-1996

Price Waterhouse (now PwC) Canada, 1986-1993

- ◆ Audit & Compliance
- ◆ Internal controls and oversight
- ◆ Mergers & Acquisitions
- ◆ Financial restructuring
- ◆ Profitability and viability analysis
- ◆ Operational rationalization and optimization
- ◆ “US Chapter 11” pre-bankruptcy turnarounds
- ◆ Bankruptcy management

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

- ◆ Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA), Member of Canadian Institute of Chartered Professional Accountants
- ◆ DESS (Diplôme d’Etudes Supérieures Spécialisées) in Specialized Accounting from the University of Québec, Canada
- ◆ Bachelor of Arts in Accounting – Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, Canada, 1985
- ◆ Maitrise en Gestion d’Entreprise from the University of Lomé, Togo, 1983
- ◆ Fluent in French and English

Contact details: Mobile: +39 335 755 8247; e-mail: gifoh@hotmail.com

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FOR IFAD PRESIDENCY

GILBERT F. HOUNGBO

1. What is your vision for IFAD and how would you strengthen its role and effectiveness as part of the international architecture, particularly in the context of COVID-19, in contributing to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, especially the elimination of hunger, malnutrition and poverty?

I work for a world where all people enjoy a full set of rights, opportunities and adequate standards of living that allow them to fully and productively engage and prosper in society. Historically and now, rural people and communities are the ones most left behind; economically, socially and politically. The road to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) goes through rural areas. To build a world where all are fully and productively engaged requires creating vibrant, inclusive and sustainable rural economies.

A strong and effective IFAD can play a key role in achieving this vision. Four years ago, I ran for President of IFAD with that conviction in mind, ready to implement a reform agenda. Achieving this vision required an agenda to improve IFAD's strategic positioning in the international development arena; to enhance its policy engagement, partnership building and knowledge management; and to strengthen its institutional structure. IFAD's work is critical for achieving the SDGs, but its work cannot be done in isolation, project by project. It must be embedded in broader development efforts.

I have led a reform agenda and driven toward this vision while remaining focused on small-scale producers (particularly women, youth, indigenous people and vulnerable populations) and emphasising the achievement of results, such as increasing productivity and income, improving nutrition and building resilience. The reforms have accomplished a great deal, but creating an institution that is irreversibly effective in achieving its mandate requires even more.

Given the challenges created by COVID-19 and the weaknesses in food systems that it has exposed, I am convinced more than ever of the key role IFAD can play. It is the only international development and financial organization that focuses exclusively on rural areas and rural people. In the current context of increasing national and international demands for assistance, and growing competition for development resources, rural people will be left behind and will find themselves at the bottom of the income pyramid—unless an organization like IFAD advocates for them and works on their behalf. That is why continuing to strengthen IFAD's role and effectiveness as a key part of the international architecture is critical.

Doing so starts with building on IFAD's comparative advantage as an organization that knows how to invest in rural people, address issues of inclusion (e.g. women, youth, indigenous people), build resilience to climate change and shocks, and enhance nutrition. Its advantage in these areas can be enhanced by further integrating key mainstreaming themes, working more on digital agriculture, expanding efforts to shorten value chains, working directly with the private sector, facilitating more inclusive infrastructure investment, and learning to address the development challenges in conflict and post-conflict situations.

However, this can only be achieved by being closer to those IFAD seeks to support. In my first term, I doubled IFAD's field presence from one of every six staff in the field to one of every three, including country teams and technical specialists. If provided a second term, I would increase this number to nearly half of IFAD staff in the field. This decentralization has been complemented by a change in the role of Country Directors to focus on engagement and partnership building with governments and development actors, while technical staff focus on project design and supervision. A stronger regional and country presence will also allow for an increased focus on knowledge management and South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC).

My vision for IFAD is one in which it is a close partner of governments and development actors contributing to broader efforts to achieve the SDGs and to respond to COVID's effects on food systems. IFAD's loans and grants and other investment instruments should complement broader efforts to achieve the SDGs and ensure that small-scale producers and the rural poor, particularly women, youth, indigenous peoples and vulnerable populations, are included in development efforts to eliminate hunger, malnutrition and poverty.

2. As President, how would you ensure IFAD's continued financial sustainability and mobilization of more resources to allow IFAD to fulfil its mission and exert its comparative advantages?

Financial sustainability requires mobilizing enough resources to achieve greater impact, as well as using those resources efficiently and effectively to maximize value for money.

I entered IFAD with an agenda to strengthen IFAD's financial sustainability, by significantly expanding IFAD's resource base while ensuring adequate risk-management mechanisms and safeguards are in place to accompany the growth. Building a solid financial architecture has been the driving force behind my reform agenda to develop a sounder and more disciplined use of resources to achieve the highest development impact.

This transformation of IFAD's financial architecture has required addressing several issues simultaneously. First, the Debt Sustainability Framework (DSF) needed attention early on, particularly since debt issues affect the most needy and poorest countries. Towards this end, I introduced a reform to ensure a sustainable level of funding from IFAD's donors to the poorest countries, and to support debt distress management.

The new DSF mechanism was accompanied by other reforms intended to reinforce IFAD's governance for enhanced financial discipline. These included the Capital Adequacy Policy, the Asset and Liability Management Framework, the Liquidity Framework, and a revised approach to determining the Resources Available for Commitment. An updated internal control framework and controllership function, new guidelines on financial crime and an updated Enterprise Risk Management Framework were also introduced. Overall, creating a more solid financial architecture is required to strengthen IFAD's efforts to leverage resources through borrowing and ensure that core funds are focused on the poorest countries.

As President of IFAD in a second term, I would focus the next four years on consolidating the institutional, operational, and financial reforms initiated in my first term. While replenishment contributions will remain the bedrock of IFAD's financing, the mobilization of resources from additional sources will be essential in closing the financing gap to reach SDG1 and SDG2—estimated at US\$160 billion per year for the next decade. Thus, significant efforts are being put in place to leverage IFAD's resources by expanding its resource base through sovereign borrowing (supported by another initiative that led to IFAD's recent AA+ credit rating), private development banks, philanthropic institutions and the private sector, as well as through climate financing.

While IFAD's program of loans and grants funded through core contributions will remain the at the heart of IFAD activities, to achieve results in key areas and take advantage of funding opportunities, in a second term I will continue to expand resource mobilization linked to building resilience, particularly to climate change, and to supporting private-sector engagement with small-scale producers. There is a desperate need to increase finance in these areas and an interest among a range of donors. With its particular capacity to invest in rural people, IFAD is in a good position to facilitate and direct finance in these thematic areas to serve the neediest.

The efforts to increase resources and improve the effectiveness of their use contribute to IFAD's achievement of its core mandate to improve the well-being of rural people. As President, I am very conscious of the need to maintain that focus and to demonstrate effectiveness in achieving results in the area of IFAD's comparative advantage.

Ultimately, and building on the principle of universality, IFAD's strategic engagement will be more comprehensive and better tailored to meet the needs of countries at different development stages—be it low-income countries, lower-middle-income countries, or upper-middle-income countries—as well as countries in fragile situations.

3. The mandate of IFAD is to support the development and poverty reduction of smallholder farmers globally. From your perspective, how could IFAD further strengthen its cooperation with low-income, lower-middle-income and upper middle-income countries?

My vision for IFAD has been one in which it is present within countries, engaged in policy discussions, and ready to bring knowledge and finance in the areas of IFAD's comparative advantage. Only through a decentralized structure in which IFAD staff see their actions within broader government and international efforts to achieve the SDGs can IFAD adequately tailor its cooperation with low-income, lower-middle-

income and upper middle-income countries. Being country specific requires being engaged at the country level.

The reforms implemented in my first term were intended to move IFAD in this direction. The decentralization, the internal reforms to structures and human resource management, and the strengthening of policy engagement, partnership building, knowledge management, and impact measurement were designed to achieve this vision and strengthen cooperation. Yet, more can be done to ensure comprehensive country programs that provide policy advice, knowledge and project finance to support rural people.

In a second term, while continuing to focus on improving the well-being of rural people and on building sustainable resilience at the household, community and country level, I will work to create a more comprehensive approach to our actions, bringing humanitarian and development interventions closer together. Fragility is strongly linked to rural poverty and hunger, so strengthening cooperation with countries in these areas is critical. Along similar lines, facilitating a comprehensive strategy for rural poverty and hunger alleviation requires considering the link between targeted productive investment and social protection. These aspects should be aligned to ensure the SDGs are met.

Further, recognizing that rural areas transform along with broader economic development, and responding to the increased calls for transforming food systems, in a second term I will work to strengthen IFAD's capacity to meet country needs for these transformations. Practically speaking, this means strengthening IFAD's technical offers in areas such as digital agriculture, climate change and sustainability, social inclusion (particularly of women and youth), tertiary-level infrastructure, private-sector engagement, and value-chain development, which allows for localized supply within the food system.

4. How could IFAD strengthen knowledge-sharing and policy exchange, including through increased integration of South-South and Triangular Cooperation in its business model?

Exploiting IFAD's comparative advantage in investing in rural people requires IFAD to engage in policy and partnership building and be a knowledge broker. This is being accomplished via an enhanced knowledge-management strategy and action plan, by drawing lessons from IFAD's impact assessments and results agenda, and through facilitating South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC).

While my first term has seen an expansion of these activities, the focus still remains too focused at the global level and insufficiently so at the regional and country levels. However, IFAD's ongoing reform agenda was driven by a desire to create a strong presence in the field in order to engage locally. It also included the creation of Knowledge Management (KM) and SSTC Hubs in Asia, Africa and Latin America. These actions have laid the foundation for strengthening regional- and country-level knowledge sharing, policy exchange, and South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

If given the opportunity to continue as IFAD's president, a key objective would be to build upon this existing foundation. Specifically, this would entail using IFAD grants more strategically to enhance the knowledge-broker role, strengthening the work of the three KM-SSTC hubs, and enhancing technical approaches (machine learning and artificial intelligence) for knowledge synthesis.

Of course, continuing IFAD's global efforts to advocate for support to small-scale producers and to engage on key issues such as climate change, gender, youth and nutrition remains critical. The 2021 UN Food System Summit and IFAD's participation in the Actions Track on Advancing Equitable Livelihoods is, in particular, an important opportunity to ensure that small-scale producers and the rural poor remain on the global agenda and that food systems are sustainable, nutritious and inclusive.

5. Describe the values that would guide you as the President of IFAD. Describe also your management style and how you would work with your ideal senior management team, including with regard to IFAD's ongoing decentralization process.

Throughout my career, my management style has been shaped by three core values: integrity, equality and caring. Integrity means ensuring I lead by example and with the maximum level of fairness, transparency and honesty. Equality means fostering an environment where all voices can be heard, from Board members to

senior management and staff, to those we serve. And caring means following my deep vocation to work in the service of people, particularly those suffering the most.

Should I have the opportunity to lead IFAD for another four years, I would continue my efforts to foster a professional, results-oriented, constructive team among members of senior management and staff. Putting together a senior-management team has at time been challenging since it requires both a diversity of voices and high levels of competence. We want those who are capable, but have a range of backgrounds and experiences to ensure a diversity of options. But at this critical juncture, I am pleased to say we have created a strong senior management team, which is moving IFAD forward.

I expect those team members to voice their ideas and to openly debate issues. Once decisions are agreed upon, I also expect them to work collectively to put those decisions into place. This is particularly critical in reform processes such as decentralization and human resources reform. There is no perfect answer with respect to the degree and pace of change, but we must do the best we can, agree on the most appropriate way forward, and strive for a unified change-management process that is transparent and considers the well-being of our staff, but that ultimately also makes IFAD a more effective institution.

A key part of the overall management structure will be to facilitate greater leadership from the field. Toward this end, should I serve a second term, the current decentralization process would be consolidated—with Regional Divisions and Directors located in each region and 40-50 percent of staff based in field offices. This would be accompanied by enhanced decision-making power in the field to ensure meaningful decentralization. The ideal decentralization is one in which broad guidance and direction are provided from headquarters but decisions based on this guidance are made in the regions and countries in which IFAD works.
