

Closing Statement by Mr Suminto, Chairperson of the forty-fourth session of the Governing Council of IFAD

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

The time has come to draw the forty-fourth session of the Governing Council to a close. This year's Council has been both a Council of firsts and a Council of consolidation. For the first time ever, the Governing Council was held by virtual means. Notwithstanding the physical distance that separated us, we came together as Governors of this Fund to take a number of important decisions.

This session will remain in our memories thanks to the distinguished guests who honoured us with keynote speeches during the inaugural ceremony – His Excellency João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, the President of the Republic of Angola, His Excellency Imran Khan, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and His Excellency Luigi Di Maio, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Italian Republic. Their words and participation in this session bear witness to the esteem in which they hold our organization. We also had the pleasure of hearing the outcomes of the recently concluded Indigenous Peoples' Forum, the impact of IFAD's engagement with indigenous peoples, our successes, lessons learned, challenges and opportunities.

It was my pleasure and privilege to preside over the appointment of Mr Gilbert Houngbo to his second term as President of IFAD. His vision and leadership of the Fund have transformed IFAD and made it more fit for purpose, better placed to contribute substantively to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. He has achieved much in his first term and we look forward to his continued success over the next four years.

Governors considered and approved various business items, not least of which the Report of the Consultation on the Twelfth Replenishment, which sets out the strategic direction for the Fund for the period 2022-2024. Our sincere thanks and congratulations to our colleagues on the IFAD12 Consultation for their dedication and commitment to IFAD. Our thanks also to those Member States who have pledged contributions to the IFAD12 Replenishment. IFAD is the champion of rural people, of those most often marginalized and left behind. We need to ensure that IFAD has the resources required to make the difference we know it can make. It is in that spirit that Member States, who have not yet done so, are strongly encouraged to make their pledges as soon as possible.

By approving the proposed amendments to IFAD's basic legal texts, we have ensured that Management can implement the financial architecture policies and frameworks that have already been approved by the Executive Board and that will facilitate the successful delivery of IFAD12.

The Council elected 18 new members and alternate members of the Executive Board for the three-year term of office from 2021-2023. Allow me to congratulate the new Executive Board members. We look forward to their dedicated leadership and we thank the outgoing Board members for their commitment to the Fund.

Distinguished Governors,

During this Governing Council, we benefitted from a rich programme of events that provided opportunities to hear from and exchange experiences with many partners and stakeholders. From the board room of Mars Incorporated to the rural areas of Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, Peru and the Solomon Islands; from the European Commission to the office of the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for the upcoming Food Systems Summit; from the Finance Ministries, the Agriculture Ministries, the Foreign Ministries of the Fund's Member States to this virtual platform, all voices spoke as one in proclaiming support for IFAD and the relevance of its mandate.

It has been an honour to have presided over this important session of the Governing Council. I wish to thank my colleagues on the Bureau and the Secretary of IFAD, who have assisted me in this endeavour. I would also like to express the Council's thanks to the staff of IFAD, who have all worked so diligently in organizing such a successful and highly innovative conference. A special note of thanks goes as well to all those behind the scenes without whom no conference could function, not the least of which the interpreters and technical staff.

Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The task ahead of us is not an easy one – eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by 2030. Over the past two days, we have done our part to place IFAD firmly on the path towards increasing its impact where it is most needed – in the rural areas of the developing world. But our job is not done. We have a mere nine years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Let us continue, therefore to advocate for IFAD, to provide concrete support and to bridge the investment gap on rural development.

On that note, I hereby close the forty-fourth session of the Governing Council.