

**Closing Statement by His Excellency Alex Alonso Contreras Miranda,
Chairperson of the forty-sixth session of the Governing Council of IFAD**

Mr President,
Distinguished Governors and delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

We have now come to the end of the forty-sixth session of the Governing Council of IFAD. After two years of restrictions imposed by the coronavirus pandemic, it was indeed an honour and a pleasure to be able to conduct this session in person. This facilitated not only fruitful plenary discussions, but also dynamic face to face interaction amongst Governors and delegates that has been missed very much.

Allow me, distinguished governors, ladies and gentlemen, to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to all of you. Thank you for actively participating in the deliberations, sharing your knowledge and ideas, and reinforcing the innovative and catalytic role that IFAD plays in accelerating action for food security.

Over the past two days, we have considered a number of business items that are at the very core of IFAD's operations, such as, approving the Fund's budget and establishing the Consultation on the Thirteenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources. We also had the opportunity to approve the application for non-original membership from Ukraine.

The theme of the session – Accelerating action for food security – underpinned the statements that were delivered by the distinguished guests who honoured this Council by sharing their messages of determination, resilience and most importantly, the need to collectively work together to deliver on the 2030 Agenda.

We were honoured by our special guest, His Excellency, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, President of the Federal Republic of Somalia, who delivered a powerful keynote address highlighting the need for us to join hands, pool resources, and refocus our collective efforts on accelerating action for food security. His Excellency underscored the need to re-inject hope and opportunity in agriculture, as well as the importance of supporting smallholder farmers, pastoralists, and agro-pastoralists in reviving their lands and turning them into thriving businesses. This message was reiterated by our youth advocates, Indigenous Peoples' representatives, participants to the interactive sessions, and all the governors through their statements and interventions. The fact that we are speaking as "One" is exactly what we need in times like these. We need to join forces not individually but collectively, not by duplicating one another's efforts but by capitalizing on our respective strengths and comparative advantages. We must remember the proverb: "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." We are stronger when we are working together. L'union fait la force.

Her Excellency, Mia Amor Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados reiterated the need for us to continue working with governments to support smallholder agriculture and rural transformation. Her Excellency noted that it is imperative that we urgently invest in ending the world's hunger and nutrition crisis as more people are hungry today than in 2015 when the Sustainable Development Goals were first introduced. The need for sound investments has underpinned many of our discussions here today and is at the core of IFAD's mandate.

The Honourable Edmondo Cirielli delivered a statement on behalf of His Excellency Antonio Tajani, Vice-President of the Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Italian Republic. I would like to thank our host government, Italy, for your steadfast support to IFAD and for underlining the need for us to cooperate, now more than ever, to reach Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, Zero Hunger.

Moreover, Mr David Beasley, the Executive Director of the World Food Programme provided a powerful video statement underscoring how food insecurity is being exacerbated by multiple crises and the urgent need for us to act now, act together and invest in strengthening global food systems. Thank you Mr Beasley for recognizing IFAD's unique ability to pilot and scale up solutions that unlock the potential of small-scale agriculture, build functioning markets and support sustainable growth in rural areas.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Mr QU Dongyu for his generous hospitality and for graciously hosting us in this historic building. Mr QU, thank you for emphasizing the essential role of partnership and for helping reinvigorate the spirit of collaboration among the Rome-based agencies. Mr QU's plea to increase investments in agri-food systems and rural development, harness the potential of technology, and ensure that farmers are at the core of our work has been reiterated throughout the past two days.

The statement of the President of IFAD, Alvaro Lario, highlighted IFAD's central role as an assembler of financing, channelling investments into sustainable food systems for development. IFAD's impact on the ground with vulnerable populations and its focus on improving livelihoods, food security and nutrition in rural areas was reiterated. This is the message that we must bring home to our governments, particularly in this important IFAD13 replenishment year. IFAD is ready to scale-up its investments and impact, but needs our support.

We also had the pleasure of engaging in a thought-provoking discussion with Under-Secretary-General Cristina Duarte, Special Adviser on Africa to the United Nations Secretary-General. Allow me to thank you for providing valuable food for thought on successes, lessons learned, challenges and opportunities.

Distinguished governors,

It was a pleasure and an honour for me to chair this session of IFAD's Governing Council. Allow me to express my personal gratitude to each of you, and to my colleagues on the Bureau, for your support. I would also like to extend our sincere gratitude to President Lario for his passion, his commitment and his unwavering leadership. A very special thanks to all the staff of IFAD, the Secretariat team, messengers, interpreters, technicians and all those working behind the scenes. Let us give them a big round of applause.

This session may be drawing to a close, but our work is not done.

Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

We have just seven years left before 2030. We know that the majority of the world's poorest and hungriest people live in rural areas and depend on agriculture and related activities for their livelihoods. We have all heard how IFAD's work goes the extra mile to reach the farthest villages and people, and how IFAD's projects and programmes have a direct impact on achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Let us all be champions of IFAD and continue to advocate for the Fund as a fundamental stakeholder in eradicating poverty and hunger.

On this note, I hereby declare the forty-sixth session of the Governing Council closed.