

Closing statement by the Governor for the Federal Republic of Nigeria, The Honourable Senator Abubakar Kyari CON, Minister for Agriculture and Food Security, Chairperson of the Governing Council of IFAD

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

As the forty-ninth session of the Governing Council of IFAD draws to a close, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to each of you, Distinguished Governors, delegates, and partners, for your active engagement and thoughtful contributions over the past two days.

Allow me to once again convey my profound appreciation for the trust you have placed in me through my election as Chairperson at this session of the Governing Council.

I am deeply grateful for the support of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, under the leadership of His Excellency President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, whose strong commitment to food security and agricultural transformation continues to shape Nigeria's constructive engagement in both national and global food security governance.

I accept this responsibility with humility and with a deep sense of duty to the rural women and men whom IFAD serves across the world.

The theme of this session, "From Farm to Market: Investing with Young Entrepreneurs," has inspired rich and forward-looking dialogue. We have been reminded that if we sow investment, trust, and opportunity in our young entrepreneurs, the harvest will be thriving markets and shared prosperity.

Throughout our discussions, it has become clear that the journey from farm to market is not solely about production. It is about people. It is about young innovators with ideas, energy, and the determination to build sustainable livelihoods and transform rural economies.

During the Centre Stage Event, "Young Entrepreneurs at the Heart of Transformation: From Vision to Impact," IFAD's President and Mr Tony Elumelu underscored the transformative role of youth entrepreneurship in revitalizing rural economies and food systems. We also heard directly from young entrepreneurs whose journeys from vision to impact demonstrate the power of targeted investment and enabling environments.

When we equip young people with access to finance, skills, mentorship and markets, we do more than support individual enterprises. We strengthen value chains, generate employment, foster innovation, and secure our shared economic future.

We were privileged to hear from Her Excellency Dr Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser Al Misnad, Minister of State for International Cooperation of the State of Qatar, and from His Excellency Reuben Mtolo Phiri, MP, Minister for Agriculture of the Republic of Zambia, speaking on behalf of His Excellency President Hakainde Hichilema. Dr Felipe Paullier, Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, also joined us through his video message. Each contribution reinforced the urgency of nurturing ideas, strengthening pathways from farm to market, and building a secure, inclusive and sustainable future.

Distinguished Governors,

We have deliberated on important business items central to IFAD's mission, including the approval of the Fund's budgets, the Establishment of the Consultation on the Fourteenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources, and the adoption of an e-voting system.

Our exchanges extended beyond formal agenda items. We explored how international financial institutions can mobilize coordinated, country-driven investments at the first mile. We considered how strategic investments in water security can enable small-scale farmers to adapt to climate change and build resilient futures. We examined inclusive value chains, risk management, private-sector partnerships, and the central role of women farmers in advancing rural prosperity.

In recognition of the International Year of the Woman Farmer, we were honoured by the keynote remarks of Her Excellency Mary Robinson, co-founder of Project Dandelion and former President of Ireland. The session highlighted how women, particularly young women, are leading innovation and entrepreneurship in rural communities, and how targeted support strengthens food systems while expanding opportunity.

We also celebrated continued progress since the adoption of the International Day of Family Remittances. Remittances remain a powerful instrument for inclusive and sustainable development, strengthening resilience, expanding financial inclusion, empowering youth and addressing the drivers of migration.

The Annual Governors' Roundtable provided a valuable platform to reflect on strategic priorities for IFAD's next replenishment period. Your insights will help shape the IFAD14 Consultation process and guide the Fund's efforts to deliver greater impact at scale in the years ahead. Your interventions reaffirmed the importance of multilateralism and our shared commitment to IFAD's mandate in service of rural communities worldwide.

Distinguished Governors,

It has been both a pleasure and a profound honour to preside over this forty-ninth session of the Governing Council.

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to my colleagues on the Bureau, His Excellency M. Gabriel Mbairrobe, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Cameroon and Governor for the Republic of Cameroon, and His Excellency Christophe Schiltz, Governor for the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, for their steadfast collaboration and support.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the President of IFAD, His Excellency Alvaro Lario; for his dedication, passion and committed leadership of the Fund; the Vice-President, Her Excellency Gerardine Mukeshimana; the Secretary of IFAD, Dr Claudia ten Have; and the Senior Management of IFAD for their leadership and commitment to advancing the Fund's mandate.

I wish to specially recognize Ambassador Yaya Adisa Olaitan Olaniran, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Agencies in Rome, for his consistent diplomatic engagement and support.

I equally acknowledge the IFAD Nigeria Country Office, under the leadership of Country Director Dede Ekoue, as well as IFAD's country offices and field teams across all regions, whose tireless engagement continues to translate policy into meaningful impact for rural communities.

My appreciation also goes to the Secretariat team, interpreters, technicians, messengers, and all staff members and everyone working behind the scenes whose professionalism ensured the smooth and successful conduct of this session.

Let us show our appreciation to all of them with a well-deserved round of applause.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

As this session draws to a close, our work continues.

Let us act together as true champions of IFAD. Let us advocate for its indispensable role in the fight against poverty and hunger. Let us continue sowing the seeds of opportunity, knowing that the harvest we cultivate today will sustain generations to come.

On that note, I hereby declare the forty-ninth session of the Governing Council closed.

Thank you.