
Closing statement by President Alvaro Lario

Document: GC 49/INF.8

Date: 11 February 2026

Distribution: Public

Original: English

FOR: INFORMATION

Mr Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Governors,
Friends and colleagues,

Let me start by thanking the Bureau, and all the distinguished representatives from across the Lists, for your engagement over the past two days.

Let me also thank the speakers and special guests who have been with us. And I want to recognize also the technicians, interpreters and staff from across the institution who have worked behind the scenes to make this happen. This has been the work of more than a year and we are already starting to prepare for next year, for our GC50, which marks the beginning of the celebrations of our fiftieth anniversary.

This year is also a replenishment year, which clearly gives us an opportunity to really move into action many of the conversations that we've had today. Over the past two days, we have returned repeatedly to one priority: young people, especially young entrepreneurs – as you have heard from today and yesterday – and the roles that they can play across the entire value chain.

During our Centre Stage, we heard directly from them some of the challenges they face and some of the challenges we need to really tackle and work together on; some of the choices they are forced to make, and the persistence that keeps them going and that makes a business viable. We also saw their ideas, their hopes and their leadership in action.

Yet, as I noted yesterday, even if young people will shape the future of farming, this generation is facing a gap between their potential and the investments, the services and the finance that they require to really make things happen.

Distinguished Governors,

During today's Roundtable, we heard your guidance very clearly: remain focused and effective, strengthen resilience in the face of climate shocks and fragility, invest in young people and women, deepen partnerships - including with the private sector - and ensure that IFAD's investments respond to country contexts and national priorities. The priorities you have shared with us today will continue to guide all our work over the next years.

Excellencies,

I am proud of what IFAD delivers, and how the institution has strengthened its capacity to deliver at scale.

IFAD exists because others had the foresight, almost five decades ago, to create an institution designed to invest in rural areas systematically and at scale.

They understood that an international financial institution could use its resources and its expertise to reduce poverty through targeted investments in rural people and food systems, creating economic opportunity, strengthening food security and supporting rural communities to build prosperity.

Those articles of agreement are now more valid than ever. My focus is to ensure that IFAD continues to deliver its unique role at the first mile. That means staying focused on evidence and results: production, market access and incomes.

Distinguished Governors,

In closing, I also want to offer my thanks to all the staff across IFAD who have worked tirelessly for over a year, as I said, to support this Governing Council, and who go beyond what is required so that IFAD can deliver every day. Please join me in a round of applause for them.

To all of you, I thank you for your trust and support. This year, it is more important than ever. Tomorrow we will have more conversations on why it is important to continue united at this moment to face some of the global challenges that we are trying to address, many of them in fragile situations, in contexts that are very difficult and in remote areas that are very costly to reach. And that is precisely why IFAD exists – to really tackle those challenges, to role model and build investments that can then really fit into national development programmes and can be scaled up. Thank you for your commitment on this common journey.

I look forward to welcoming you back at the fiftieth session of the Governing Council, which we are already starting to prepare for. We are looking forward to having many of your Heads of State and also important guests. It will mark the beginning of the celebrations of our fiftieth anniversary, which is a very important moment and we are really looking forward to welcoming you back.

Thank you.