

STATEMENT (10-15 minutes)
IFAD 12 Consultation
October 20, 2020

1. Thank you for the invitation to speak before member states of IFAD during the replenishment process. In the past, our involvement was just to issue letters to support for IFAD's replenishment. However, we see a good change in the partnership between FOs and IFAD. Last week, the Steering Committee of the Farmers Forum processes also expressed gratitude to IFAD for the opportunity of having an exchange and dialogue with IFAD senior management officials on providing inputs to the IFAD 12 replenishment. It was a fruitful meeting, as we learned more about the status of IFAD's replenishment process, got clarifications on some of our questions, and articulated our thoughts on the replenishment process, all of which I would like to bring to you today.

2. Our last meeting with IFAD management was during the global Farmers Forum 2020 in Rome, last February. A month after, covid 19 came. The health protocols, the mobility and travel restrictions affected small scale family farmers and food producers, with the loss of markets and inaccessibility of farming inputs, capital and services. Covid 19 has exacerbated the many challenges and exposed the many inequities we had faced even before. During the pandemic, many farmers experienced pest outbreaks (locusts and fallworm in Africa), floods in Asia and Latin America, wiping our harvests and destroying properties. Climate change is still a felt and serious issue, along with loss of biodiversity, soil degradation, unpredictable weather patterns and shrinking democratic spaces in some of our countries.

(Our role in transforming agri and food systems)

3. But what we want to share also with you is that our organizations took initiatives to address the challenges that our members faced:

facilitating access to markets, establishing farmers markets, partnering with government and other NGOs for procurement of our products. Our cooperatives gave loans for household or village -based cooling and processing facilities. Our member organizations advocated emergency and short term policies with our governments and development partners. Many of these initiatives were done through the support of IFAD directly to our organizations.

4. In efforts to building back better, have better health, have better food systems, family farmers, which includes fishers , forest dwellers , pastoralists and herders are at the frontlines. Thus, involving them significantly in efforts of transforming agriculture and promoting sustainable food systems are key interventions. We need to upscale our initiatives, to develop stronger our capacities for climate resilience through integrated, diversified, organic, agro ecological approaches in farms, fisheries and forests. We need to strengthen our capacities to engage our governments for policy work and service delivery to farmers.

(IFAD a key partner)

5. And among the many international development partners, we see IFAd as key and strongest ally as it has the mandate to empower rural people . And the rural people is mainly our constituencies of small scale family farmers. We are inspired by what we read in your website, and I quote– “ we invest in rural people, empowering them to increase their food security, improve the nutrition of their families and increase their incomes. We help them build resilience, expand their businesses and take charge of their own development.”

6. We have been partners of IFAD for the last 14 years and we consider the Farmers’ Forum processes, at global, regional and national levels, as a unique space for dialogue and partnership with an International Financing Institution dedicated to the development of the rural poor.

IFAD has been a strong partner in the declaration of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNFFF) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants (UNDROP), and would like to see this partnership very strong in the implementation of these global instruments especially at national and regional levels.

7. Under IFAD's grant facility, AFA is a grant recipient of the Medium-Term Cooperation Program Phase 2 (MTCP2), implemented from 2013-2020, with \$13M support of IFAD and back donors SDC and EU, implemented in 17 countries in Asia Pacific. The MTCP2 is managed by AFA with another international farmer organization, La Via Campesina, and is implemented in 22 countries in Asia Pacific. At the country level, the MTCP2 strengthens platforms of national farmers organizations who work together to deliver the targets of MTCP2, alongside strengthening capacities of farmers in engaging in policy work with governments and in delivering economic services to their members.

8. We produced a 4-minute video showing some stories of the impact of MTCP2 in some countries . However, we cannot show it today. But IFAD management will send you the link to this video separately. With the MTCP2, farmers capacities to do sustainable , climate resilient agriculture, develop agripreneurs, establish viable enterprises and cooperatives, strengthen their organizational and finance management systems, and in the process, partner with governments on some other IFAD -supported projects, do policy advocacy , increase their incomes, and raise their self esteem as farmers.

And at the regional level, at ASEAN level, The MTCP2-AFOSP program has strengthened partnerships with the ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Agricultural Cooperatives, the ASEAN Center for the Development of Agricultural Cooperatives on the implementation a roadmap on strengthening agricultural cooperatives, strengthening the partnerships between farmers and officials of government agencies dealing with the

cooperative movement. and at SAARC level, the program has strengthened the partnership with the SAARC Secretariat and SAARC Agriculture Center , with the conduct of various fora on cooperatives, sustainable agriculture, women and youth.

(Recommendations on the Funding Facilities):

9. We are eager to help in IFAD's replenishment efforts. However, we strongly request the following:

- We understand that the current allocation for global /regional grants is 5% , from which most of IfAD's support to Farmers organizations is taken from. We strongly request to retain this, and if possible, give more and better grant financing DIRECT TO Farmers organizations , to support our unique contributions to our common goals of Farming for Food, for Health, for a Resilient Climate, and for Sustainable Food Systems, through strengthening our capacities for policy advocacy, especially with policy priorities in COSOPS, for promoting sustainable, climate resilient agro ecological based livelihoods while also empowering our women and youth members.

Global/ Regional grants to FOs have a unique value: sectoral consolidation, strengthening learning exchange for innovation, better input to global policy by decreasing coalition cost for efficient policy engagement, and direct service delivery to national members, increasing ownership and accountability. Without these grants, the cost of generating feedback and policy input from farmers in remote areas will be very costly and will take long time. With regional FOs facilitating and synthesizing feedback from the ground, policies are made more responsive to ground realities.

At the national level, with technical assistance and sharing of guidelines and good experience from the regional level FO and IFAD officials, national FOs are engaging in IFAD supported projects, such as the RAPID project in the Philippines , the AFN project in Laos and the ASPIRE project in Cambodia. Having Farmers Organizations as service providers, or as organizers and capacity builders of the farmers groups under IFAD projects can be viable and sustainable exit strategies of your projects.

- We welcome the ASAP+ and PSFP . These financial instruments should be directly accessible to small scale food producers through their community -based organizations, POs and cooperatives, including fishery and livestock farmers, as we make efforts to scale up good practices in climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as implement viable business plans for our cooperatives and farmer- driven investments.
- We request IFAD to strongly include PO representatives in the governance structures for these instruments. To have at least 3 seats to represent Africa, Asia and Latin America. We would like to work with IFAD in the design, implementation and monitoring mechanisms for these instruments.

10. We wish IFAD a successful IFAD 12 replenishment , as we look forward to what it will bring for fruitful partnership with Farmers organizations in the work of empowering small scale women and men family farmers. Thank you for your attention. Have a good day.

Statement delivered by Esther Penunia, Secretary General, Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA)