

Opening Remarks by Ms. Josefina Stubbs, AVP, SKD

New Delhi, 12 May 2016

Honourable Additional Secretary of Finance, Mr. Dinesh Sharma

Honourable Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. Pattanayak

Distinguished representatives of government agencies and Partners of IFAD's
co financed projects

Esteemed colleagues from the UN Family, IFIs and civil society representatives.

Colleagues from IFAD

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to start with thanking the government of India for their warm
reception to our delegation. I am here today representing IFAD senior
management at the Country Programme Evaluation roundtable. This is my first
visit to India and I must say that I am extremely impressed by what I have seen.
I wonder why it took me so long to come here!

The extraordinary developments that I witnessed on my field visits in the North
East Region are a testament to the commitment and efforts being made by the

country to make sure that the growth is empowering and inclusive. In the state of Meghalaya, we visited two on-going IFAD projects, and I had the privilege to interact with rural women, who were invisible not so long ago, but who are now emerging as community leaders and clearly in the driving seat of their local and community development.

Over the past decade, the economic and social transformation of India has been phenomenal. Robust economic growth, progressive reforms and ambitious social safety net programmes have led to a significant decline in poverty and made India the third largest economy in the world. To its credit, India achieved the target for reducing poverty and hunger by half (Millennium Development Goal 1) and gender parity in primary school enrolment (MDG 3). When India progresses against these targets, well-being improves globally. We are extremely proud to have made a contribution to this achievement.

However, there is still much work to be done. The sustainable development goals have raised the bar, and we must now work to ensure we leave no one behind. We are 100% committed to continue our partnership with India at the country and global level to achieve this ambitious goal.

Our core business is agricultural financing and we have funded 27 projects to date for a total value of 929 million USD of IFAD loans, thus making the programme in India the largest in our organization.

We are proud to see that this partnership is well valued by our Government partners and by the communities, and that it is making a tangible impact in the lives of women, tribal groups and smallholders.

We are pleased that IFAD funded projects and programmes have contributed to make agriculture – namely rainfed agriculture – more productive and remunerative for the rural poor. This was achieved through supporting sustainable production techniques, substituting credit from moneylenders with credit from Self Help Groups and private banks, developing commercial smallholder agriculture through more direct links to the markets, and effectively organizing community and farmers' associations. We are also very encouraged to see IFAD projects successfully reaching out to and empowering tribal groups in remote areas, even in areas subject to unrest. Finally, I am very happy to see that IFAD financed innovations are often scaled up through Government programmes.

During my field visit and in discussions with state officials, again as is the case in the continent where I come from, Latin America, there is wide spread recognition of the transformative effects brought about by the bottom up approaches and methodologies developed by IFAD. We believe that people in communities are not just passive beneficiaries but central actors in their own development, the development of their communities and the nation at large.

We have effectively partnered with the Government of India for 35 years.

India is not only IFAD's largest program, India is one of the most important contributors to IFAD and a very active source of guidance in our governing bodies. In other words the Government of India is one of IFAD's most trusted and important partners.

Today, we are here to reflect on the findings of the second IFAD Country Programme Evaluation conducted by IFAD Independent Office of Evaluation.

The first one in 2010, and the second one in 2015, both confirm that the IFAD supported country programme in India remains relevant, effective, sustainable, innovative and its approaches promote gender equity and are being scaled-up.

Evaluations offer the opportunity to reflect and improve on performance.

We are committed to build upon the recommendations of the country programme evaluation including a focus on rain-fed agriculture, climate change, food security and support to value chain developments and access to markets.

In addition to the investment program, it is clear we need to devote more efforts and energy to non-lending activities such as sharing knowledge both in and out of India for example through S-S cooperation; and through leveraging

partnerships with key stakeholders in government, civil society and private sector. We recognize also the need to enhance IFAD's analytical capability to better inform decision makers at the national level on key issues emerging from the country program.

Together with the government of India, we should double our efforts to improve the efficiency in the implementation of the portfolio. This round table is an opportunity to discuss this issue and arrive at operational solutions.

I would like to acknowledge the IFAD Country Team in India, Meera, Vincent and Sriram as well as all the consultants and resource persons associated with the programme for their smart and hard work that contributed to these results.

For the last five years the program of India has been led by Nigel Brett. During this period Nigel has ably and successfully overseen the growth and improvement of the program performance. The results on the ground bear testimony to this. Today Nigel Brett is here representing the Asia and Pacific Division in his new capacity as Lead Portfolio Adviser.

I am also very pleased to inform you that we now have a Country Representative in India, Ms. Rasha Omar, who has officially started her assignment on 3rd May. Rasha is one of IFAD's highest performing CPMs and

has worked in some of the most challenging country programs supported by IFAD including Sudan and Congo. Her outstanding contributions led to her being recognized by a special presidential award in 2012. You could not be in better hands. Rasha will be leading the IFAD Country Office and we are sure that this will further strengthen the partnership with the Government.

Let me now conclude by thanking once again the Government of India for the long standing and mutually rewarding partnership, in support of our shared goal in eradicating rural poverty.

I wish you a successful workshop and I look forward to hearing your discussions, conclusions and recommendations.