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General Statement by Canada

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C'est avec grand plaisir que je m'adresse à vous aujourd'hui au nom du Gouvernement du Canada pour cette quarante et unième session du Conseil des Gouverneurs du Fonds international de développement agricole. Cette session est importante, car elle marque à la fois le quarantième anniversaire du FIDA, et nous donne une occasion de célébrer le partenariat de longue date que le Canada et le FIDA entretiennent depuis sa création. Le thème de cette année: 'De la fragilité à la résilience à long terme: investir dans des économies rurales durables', met bien l'accent sur l'engagement de l'Agenda 2030 pour le développement durable de ne laisser personne pour compte et nous donne l'occasion d'échanger, au cours de ce Conseil, sur les facteurs internes et externes aux pays membres qui contribuent à la fragilité et mettent en péril les efforts visant à éliminer la faim et la pauvreté.

Since its inception in 1977 IFAD has played a prominent role in the transformation of rural areas, investing in rural people, leading the fight against poverty and food insecurity, reducing fragility and building resilience. The task is a daunting one but IFAD, together with its partners, has steadfastly focused on the hard to reach, marginalised rural areas where others are, at times, loath to work and invest. The Fund's comparative advantage continues to lie in targeting the extreme poor and food-insecure in rural areas, with special attention to women, youth and indigenous peoples as key beneficiaries, and also as full partners.

Yet the challenges facing IFAD, and the global community at large, are immense and are being exacerbated by, among others, climate change and conflict. As noted in the 2017 State of Food Security and Nutrition report, prepared by the Rome-based UN agencies, UNICEF and the World Health Organisation, the number of undernourished people in the world has increased from 777 million in 2015 to 815 million in 2016. The prevalence of undernourishment has also increased: 11 per cent of the world's population is undernourished. One in nine people in the world go to bed hungry. And all this comes on the heels of an international commitment to eradicate hunger and extreme poverty by 2030.

Canada welcomes IFAD's approach to these development challenges and supports the direction the Fund is taking on the key issues of gender, climate change, nutrition and youth, as well as its commitment to move towards transformational approaches that target the root causes of poverty, vulnerability and inequality. Indeed, meaningful rural transformation is dependent on stepping up efforts to address these four important cross-cutting issues. Canada is also supportive of IFAD's efforts to renew its approach to resource allocation and mobilisation, and its emphasis on managing for better results. President Houngbou is to be commended for spearheading this initiative aimed at operational excellence. Going forward, these efforts will ensure a strong focus on the poorest and most vulnerable, while engaging in innovative financing will ensure that the Fund has sufficient means at its disposal for the challenges that lie ahead.

Canada is pleased with IFAD's commitment to set new standards of measurement for its work on gender equality and women's empowerment. Last June Canada introduced its first 'Feminist International Assistance Policy' the objective of which is to reduce extreme poverty by promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls - not at the expense of men and boys – but alongside them. Canada is putting women and girls at the centre of our international assistance policy because they are powerful agents of change and because the evidence clearly shows that empowering women and girls is the most effective way to tackle poverty and inequality. But Canada cannot do it alone. We will rely heavily on our partners, such as IFAD, who are well-placed to engage with local women's organizations to help change social norms and make gender transformational change a reality.

Finally, *l'Union fait la force* - not only when women and men work together for change, but also when Canada and its development partners, such as IFAD, partner with organisations in civil society, the private sector, and beyond, that can help innovate for tangible resiliency-building outcomes.

Thank you. Merci.