

Statement by the Cuban Ambassador and IFAD Alternate Governor

José Carlos Rodríguez Ruiz.

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On behalf of the Cuban Government , I have the pleasure to convey our greetings to all participants at the 41st session of the annual Governing Council of IFAD. I congratulate the Board elected to guide the sessions.

I would like also to send a special greeting to Dr. Hounbo, the President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and wish him the best success.

Food security is an strategic objective for the Cuban Government. Short and long term actions are carried out in order to increase efficiency in food production and decrease the high level of food imports. Projects we are developing today with IFAD ´s support are aimed to those goals.

Regarding the topic of the *fragility to long-term resilience: investing in sustainable rural economies*, which is the main issue of this Council; it is well known that Cuba despite being a small island developing state , has shown many times to be a country with a firm resilience, the most recently after the hit of hurricane Irma affecting 12 out of the 15 provinces.

Nevertheless, my country is not only affected by hurricanes; there are several environmental disasters, as the repeated droughts; as well as the damages caused by the economic , commercial and financial US blockade against the Cuban people, which is also impacting in the agricultural production. However , the capability of the country authorities and the population to face severe events is well known. That is, to positively organize the daily life and the society , without alienating its own identity , or put aside the endeavor and dreams to reach the prosperous and sustainable development we aspire to attain , with the human been at the main position, with social inclusion, and gender equality.

We have started the elaboration of the Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP) 2019 – 2021, which will accompany our efforts in the agricultural sector and the measures adopted by the Cuban authorities, as part of the socio- economic development Plan up to 2030.

In this framework food security and rural development are prioritized objectives . Youth and women, with a special incorporation, receive key attention within the agricultural plans, their training, without gender marginalization, is a reality all over the country.

We appreciate IFAD ´s work and specially to the Latin America and Caribbean Division for the assistance given to my country , in the cooperation for the agricultural development.

Cuba, will fulfill its commitment with the international cooperation and sustainable development, and we state our disposition to make a modest contribution to IFAD 11, similar to the one made for IFAD 10.

Cuba supports South -South cooperation. The country has a great potential in human resources as well as institutions that could be at the service of IFAD's developing countries.

Cuba encourages triangular cooperation, and is in favor of multilateralism. We are fully convinced that , before the complex problems faced by the world today, the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals , included in the 2030 Agenda , will be possible only with the joint effort and support of the international community and with that of the United Nation system.

Food must not be used as a tool for political pressure. Dialogue and not belligerence should prevail. The use of huge amount of resources in war is unfair; those resources should be used to put an end with the hunger of the 815 million persons affected today.

Finally , allow me to call all develop countries to fulfill the commitment adopted many years ago , but many times postponed, to assign the 0,7 % of the GDP to the official development assistance. That will be a significant contribution to the highest purpose to reach #ZeroHunger for all.

I wish the best working results, for the good of all.

Permanent Representation of Cuba before the International Bodies in Rome.