

Honorable chair, fellow delegates and ladies and gentlemen!

As the head of the delegation representing the Republic of Korea, it is a great pleasure for me to write and share some of our views on the occasion of the 41st session of the IFAD Governing Council. Let me first express my deepest gratitude to all staff members of IFAD for organizing this important event.

The international community has been working to help the poor population out of poverty and hunger under the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Although continued global efforts achieved some meaningful progress, much of the world's rural population are still struggling with lack of infrastructure and poor education, left in poverty and social isolation. Moreover, over 800 million people are experiencing food insecurity.

Facing these challenges, we are obliged to provide opportunities for farmers fighting poverty to improve their quality of life and achieve cultural and economic prosperity. Further, we need to increase agricultural productivity with an aim of building a sustainable global food production system while, at the same time, mobilizing our strength and wisdom to better adapt to the effects of climate change and natural disasters.

Starting from this year, the Republic of Korea will provide 50,000 metric tonnes of Korean rice as food assistance to developing countries suffering from hunger caused by conflicts and natural disasters. The decision was made to fulfill our role as a responsible member of the international community amid ever-worsening humanitarian crises. The Korean government also acceded to the Food Assistance Convention on January 31 by completing the final step of depositing the instrument of ratification to the UN.

During IFAD 11, Korea is dedicated to achieving the common goal of helping 120 million rural population in poverty by putting our efforts into increasing agricultural productivity and resilience and addressing malnutrition. We are pleased to announce that the Korean government decided to increase our contribution by 25% or more from IFAD 10. Going forward, Korea will continue to work to expand cooperation with IFAD and we also expect to see robust project management and cooperation from

IFAD.

Rural areas are fundamental to human life and home to future generations. Promoting innovation for survival and prosperity of small holder family farmers in underdeveloped countries is therefore investing in a new growth engine as well as a driving force to address poverty and food issues facing the world. I believe that this Council meeting will set the stage for building global partnership and boosting close policy coordination.

IFAD will continue to play a catalyst to creating inclusive and sustainable changes to rural areas that are prerequisite to achieving sustainable development goals. Proven programs provided by IFAD will serve as a powerful engine to reduce poverty in rural areas and secure human resources.

I look forward to in-depth discussions during the Session on issues including stronger resilience in the long-term, opportunities and challenges of multilateralism, and investment measures for young people in rural areas. Korea has thus far carried out a range of policies to inject vitality into aging rural areas by investing in young people. We have connected the agricultural sector with new growth engines by supporting agricultural start-ups, providing professional training in farming, and promoting smart-farms. I sincerely hope that these policies will become another success model which can be widely shared with other countries.

Lastly, I thank all staff members of IFAD for holding this 41st Session and we support the continuous efforts taken by IFAD to reduce poverty and hunger.

Thank you very much.