



**STATEMENT BY  
AMBASSADOR NKM SELEKA, DELIVERED ON BEHALF  
OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**41<sup>ST</sup> SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE INTERNATIONAL FUND  
FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

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Mr President,

South Africa wishes to commend IFAD for the theme of the Governing Council, which is timely and very relevant. Resilience according to the United Nations Office of Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) is defined as “the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate and to recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions.” Despite the fact that rural communities are synonymous with fragility, they however have a strong element of resilience within them. There is therefore an imperative need for the Governing Council to make it its collective responsibility to strengthen the resilience of rural poor so as to move with speed from the conditions of fragility to long-term resilience through delivery of public goods to these communities by investing in sustainable rural economies.

That said, the South African Government through the Fetsa Tlala Program is proving support to smallholder producers to put at least one million hectares of arable land under production by 2019 across the country. Linked to Fetsa Tlala is the Agri-parks Project run in conjunction with the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. The Agri-parks are established in locations throughout South Africa aimed at involving smallholders and local producers in the entire – value chain of agriculture to address both food security and poverty at a localised level. The South African Government hopes to fight issues such as the 14 million hungry South Africans, underutilised potential farmland, and the inequality between private agricultural business and the people.

Furthermore, the Government is also implementing the LandCare programme which is designed to empower South African rural youth. The programme seeks to address issues of youth unemployment, skills development, school nutrition and environmental education.

LandCare has two dimensions: In-school Junior Care and Out-of-school Junior Care. In-school Junior Care focus on capacity building and awareness by supporting schools by implementing permaculture gardens, nurseries for greening and camping, etc., while Out-of-school Junior Care focus primarily on unemployed matriculated and agricultural graduates up to the age of 35. Further to the above, the LandCare initiative is a community based and government supported approach to the sustainable management and use of agricultural natural resources. The overall goal of LandCare is to optimise productivity and sustainability of natural resources so as to result in greater productivity, food security, job creation and better quality of life for all.

Mr President, in conclusion, this theme calls for us to strengthen our resolve and commitment in ensuring that public goods are delivered to rural communities to guarantee a sustainable, better life for rural communities.

I thank you.