

# **Statement of the Delegation of the State of Eritrea on the occasion of the 41<sup>st</sup> Session of the Governing Council of IFAD**

**(13 February 2018)**

Mr. (Madame) Chairperson,

Excellencies Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

From the outset, let me express my profound gratitude to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) for the invitation extended to my Minister of Agriculture, H.E. Arefaine Berhe, who could not participate due to other very urgent tasks, and on behalf of whom I am honored to participate in this timely and important 41<sup>st</sup> Session of the Governing Council.

Mr. (Madame) Chairperson, the Global Food Crises that we are still experiencing today started long time ago. It was followed by high-profile summits organized by IFAD and others with inputs from the UN system. However, in spite of all the good will, the efforts and pledges to turn things around, little has improved since that time. Therefore, a good deal of work remains before us, particularly in the developing countries, to enhance agricultural systems, eradicate hunger and sustain food and nutrition security.

Eritrea is situated in the Sahelian part of Africa, where rains are usually insufficient and erratic. With the cooperation of IFAD, all UN organizations and through its self reliance policy, it has initiated a great deal of work in soil and water conservation, forestation and to that extent is introducing sustainable system of irrigation in all agro-ecological zones. Climate centered programs and irrigation are not just obligations and responsibilities to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). On the contrary, they are increasingly becoming part and parcel of Eritrean culture and everyday life.

Eritrea's commitment to address the issue through pragmatic measures at national and regional levels is based at Target Setting Program (TSP) and has set Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets at national as well as at Zoba level with an

ambition to reach LDN for the entire country in order to align to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG 15 target 15.3).

Among the activities carried out since independence that are related to common and widespread of soil and water conservation structural measures are: 105,000 hectare of stone bund, 153,000 hectare of soil bund, 95,000 hectare of bench terrace (land leveling) and more than 6.2 million cubic meters check dam.

Soil and water conservation, and water harvesting have direct bearing on the productivity of both crops and livestock and the final target of food and nutrition security. In Eritrea, our strategy is to practice intensive and integrated agriculture, so that we can dedicate most of the land, especially the sloppy and drier areas, to tree planting and closure establishment in order to enhance our natural resources base.

Mr. (Madame) Chairperson, Ministers, Distinguished Delegates,

We believe it is first and foremost the responsibility of every country to give food and nutrition security the highest priority and earmark proportional resources to increase production and productivity, to eliminate hunger and keep food prices stable and affordable. However, to make a solid step forward the support of IFAD, UN Organizations, Global Trust Fund and other partners is required. Strengthening community awareness in rural societies is generally recognized as a prerequisite for agricultural productivity, reducing poverty and hunger, and promoting economic growth. The Government of Eritrea therefore appreciates very much IFAD's future support.

On the other hand, in support of a successful outcome of IFAD's resources mobilization, the contribution of all the Governments is paramount. The Government of Eritrea, with its limited resources has been renewing its support to IFAD, from time to time, to enable it achieve its objectives which we believe will spill over to all member countries including Eritrea. To that extent the contribution of Eritrea in the 9<sup>th</sup> replenishment was only 10,000 USD. But in the 11<sup>th</sup> replenishment, it increased by 4 times to reach 40,000 USD.

In this occasion, we express our commitment to a successful replenishment of IFAD.

I thank you for your kind attention!