

STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE DR. OWUSU AFRIYIE AKOTO,
MINISTER FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE, GHANA, AND IFAD
GOVERNOR, DURING THE FORTY FIRST (41ST) SESSION OF THE IFAD
GOVERNING COUNCIL – ROME, FEBRUARY 13TH-14TH 2018

THEME: From Fragility to Long-term Resilience: Investing in Sustainable Rural Economies

Mr. Chairman,

The President of IFAD,

The Director General of FAO,

The Executive Director of WFP,

H.E. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh,

Representative of the Italian Republic,

Colleague Ministers and Distinguished Governors of the Fund,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen

I bring you greetings from the President of the Republic of Ghana, His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, and the people of Ghana. In deed, IFAD continues to play a key role in Ghana's agriculture development with the strong partnership that has evolved over the last 30 years. This is evident in the establishment of a country office since 2009 which has oversight for Togo as well.

Mr Chairman, investing in sustainable rural economies as a way of transforming fragile states and communities into sustainably resilient ones has been the agenda of countries for decades. We have created global, regional and national institutions to

pursue this agenda. We have designed and implemented projects in these fragile states and rural economies over the decades but the progress has been slower than expected.

Our rural communities, which depend largely on natural resources are at the centre of fragility and inability to attain long term resilience. Causes of continuing fragility and limited success in achieving long-term resilience are well known. Insecurity in some States and communities, climate change effects, poor infrastructure and ineffective institutions are but a few to mention.

Mr. Chairman, we have at the global, regional and national level designed and implemented policies and programmes to alleviate poverty and to address most of the challenges we presume are the causes for limited progress in the wellbeing of populations in fragile states and communities. We implemented 10 years of Millennium Development Goals and are in the 2nd year of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr. Chairman the theme chosen for this Session underlines more ambitious actions to accelerate growth. We cannot wait another decade to change the livelihoods of populations considered to be fragile. We have in place enough food policies and programmes, but have to translate these policies into actions. How can we achieve this?

Mr. Chairman, in January 2017 when the government of His Excellency Nana Akufo-Addo was inaugurated, the new government of Ghana recognized that agriculture, which is predominantly rural based, continues to be the anchor of the country's economy. The drive to transform the rural landscape of the country in a sustainable manner by creating a more diversified, better integrated and modern rural economy to

improve living standards and prosperity, was determined to be important in creating economic and social opportunities for young people in particular.

Government's immediate priority was to build on the resilience of the rural communities, harnessing what works successfully for them and also turn the focus on the youth, most of whom were not gainfully employed.

Mr. Chairman, with the "we can't wait spirit" my Government launched the "Planting for Food and Jobs" Campaign in 2017. At the core of the programme is to create jobs through improved access to inputs, extension services and markets. Through the pilot implemented in 2017, we have created some 745,000 jobs through incremental activities in the production of rice, maize, sorghum, soya and vegetables. Two hundred thousand farmers (200,000) were targeted directly in the first year. With the evidence of success, my Government will be scaling this programme to reach about 500,000 in 2018 and to millions of farmers in the subsequent years.

Related interventions to transform rural economies by my Government are efforts to establish rural industries under the "One District One Factory " initiative where stimulus packages are designed to attract private sector investment into rural agroindustry. In the area of making water available for small-holder farmers to enable them undertake all year round agriculture, Government has initiated the "One Village One Dam" initiative which will make available a total of about 570 boreholes and dugouts to irrigate over 2500 Hectares. To promote market access, 80 new warehouses are to be constructed and 102 warehouses rehabilitated to provide about 182,000 metric tonnes storage capacity for grain. Government will continue to invest in roads to enhance markets access for the rural communities.

Mr. Chairman, let me emphasize that weak institutions and poor mobilization and application of resources is our bane to making projects achieve their objectives. These have been the challenges facing the implementation of these novel programmes. To address this, we have initiated a process to harmonize and better coordinate project to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in programme implementation.

We have urged development partners to partner effectively with the Government by applying the limited resources available to key priorities in a harmonized and coordinated manner. For instance, we have continuously engaged with IFAD in ensuring that our partnership objectives are aligned with the national priorities in the agricultural and rural development sectors.

Mr. Chairman, achieving longterm resilience can be obtained if at the global, regional and national level we are focused, determined and committed to the implementation of the policies and programmes we set for ourselves. We must revisit the ideals of the Paris Declaration of ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results and mutual accountability. Enshrined in these pillars are tenets of leadership, efficiency and accountability which will lead us to better results.

On this note I wish to thank IFAD for the invitation to this Session and look forward to fruitful deliberations.