

COUNTRY STATEMENT TO THE 42nd IFAD GOVERNING COUNCIL: RWANDA

- **Chairperson,**
- **The President of IFAD,**
- **Distinguished Governors,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is my privilege and great honour to attend this 42nd IFAD Governing Council on behalf of my Country, Rwanda. I bring you warm greetings from the people and the Government of Rwanda in general and in particular from our President, **His Excellency Paul Kagame**.

Chairperson,

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to IFAD and the organizers of this event who have chosen the theme: ***Rural Innovation and Entrepreneurship*** for this session. The theme is very appropriate and in line with Sustainable Development Goals and our own Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture (PSTA 4), but having been implemented in our country since 2004 and aim at harmonizing the agriculture sector development activities with the National Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategies and the Vision 2020.

Like any other developing Country, Rwanda's economy is largely rural-based and faces various challenges from numerous angles, including financial, technological, socio-economical as well as environmental related aspects, and as such, requires innovations and entrepreneurial approaches to overcome them.

To meet the food demand for the growing population, we shall require moving from subsistence to technology-driven agriculture and to achieve this goal, the rural communities need skilled people through innovations using the existing resources available to them.

Over the years, our Country has developed home-grown solutions to these challenges, and have implemented them with the support of our development partners, especially IFAD.

For instance, we have the *Twigire Muhinzi* Programme where rural communities are equipped with skills on best agronomic practices. They are equipped with new technologies that can complement the practical skills they have so that they can boost productivity through simple and affordable technologies. In addition, there is a supplementary programme in place to address the issue of agri-inputs supply using cell phones locally known as *Smart Nkunganire*. These two programmes have boosted productivity significantly.

Other programmes being implemented such as Milk support programmes, One Cow per Family (Girinka), Kitchen Gardens Blended fortified foods aim at addressing issues improved nutrition.

Currently, all IFAD financed projects, both ongoing and those still in the design phases, have elements of rural innovations and entrepreneurs imbedded in them with the objectives of poverty alleviation through increased production in crop and animal enterprises as well as

mitigating against various challenges facing the rural farming communities including those related to gender, nutrition, climate change and natural resource management, among others.

IFAD financed projects also have components on rural finance whereby smallholder farmers or farmer organizations are encouraged to design rural development projects which are screened by experts before presented to banks for loans. Those approved receive subsidies from these projects.

The outcome is not only becoming rural entrepreneurs but also gaining experience with working with financial institutions. Financed projects are mainly involved in agricultural production, processing and marketing activities.

Chairperson,

I expect that during this session, we shall interact with other colleagues and experts to share ideas and experiences that shall be beneficial to the improvement of the initiatives that have already been undertaken in our respective Countries.

**Chairperson,
Mr. President
Distinguished Governors
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let me conclude by thanking IFAD once again for organizing this 42nd session and Member States who have come to bless this occasion by their presence. I take this opportunity to assure you of our continued cooperation for the well-being of our people and wish you all fruitful deliberations.

I thank you.