

Statement by the representative for Samoa

Your Excellency, Chairman of the Governing Council of IFAD, President of IFAD, Director General of FAO, Honoured Governors, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to attend the forty-second session of IFAD's Governing Council in my capacity as Samoa's Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries. Let me foremost convey to the Governing Council warm greetings from the Government and the people of Samoa and wish the council well in its deliberations.

As one of the founding members of IFAD since 1977, Samoa acknowledges and appreciates that IFAD interventions support inclusive rural transformation so rural people can achieve sustainable livelihoods via the provision of financing and technical support. This is especially important for small island developing states like Samoa as IFAD interventions target smallholder farmers and marginalized groups and help them become more resilient, integrate into supply chains, access to nutritious food and gain access to services, technologies and finance.

Like other small island development states, our agriculture sector is constrained by a mix of policy and institutional factors, which have combined to impede the productive potential of our smallholder farmers and agribusinesses. Agriculture in Samoa is also very vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, which manifests itself in more frequent and extreme rainfall events, longer dryer spells and drought events, rising sea levels, extreme winds and high air and water temperatures. The effects of climate change and variability will make agricultural production more challenging.

IFAD's first financing in Samoa was for the Livestock Development Project from 1982 to 1987, followed by the Rural Activation Project from 1993 to 1996; both on highly concessional terms. Through its financing to the Pacific Community (SPC)/POETcom, IFAD assisted our Women in Business Development Inc. (WIBDI) in establishing a Pacific Organic Standard, and applying Participatory Guarantee Schemes for organic branding, and also supported our national stakeholders forum in 2016 on the development of our agritourism plans.

I am most pleased to advise that our recent re-engagement with IFAD has benefitted Samoa via a joint project with the World Bank. The objective of this project is to increase productivity and market access of selected agricultural producers [smallholder farmers, and in particular rural women and youth], and to improve management and climate resilience of productive natural resources. The intervention seeks to empower rural communities and strengthen capabilities of their farmers'

organizations; deliver improved technical packages to growers (e.g. on mixed farming, horticultural and post-harvest practices), with emphasis on improving coconut and cocoa farming, upgrade farm access infrastructure, and ensure growers and value chain actors have access to the financial services they need to expand their business. Put together, these interventions shall empower communities as self-driven agents of development, broker partnerships with agribusinesses and private sector, and expand smallholders' sales to domestic and niche export markets.

In closing, as a testament of our commitment to support IFAD in whatever small way we can, in appreciation of our re-established partnership, Samoa will contribute some funds to the Eleventh Replenishment of IFAD Resources.

Thank you and wish all participants a safe return home at the end of our meeting. God bless.