

Statement by the representative for the French Republic

This year, 2019, is the first year of IFAD11, as well as an important year in many respects for France, which will preside over the G7 this year.

France is anxious to take concrete action to fight rural poverty and hunger and is determined to support IFAD's ambitious loans and grants programme. France has increased its contribution between IFAD10 and IFAD11 by more than 40 per cent.

We are equally proud to be one of the first member countries to grant IFAD a highly concessional loan in the amount of EUR 50 million, which will enable IFAD to diversify its financial instruments.

This loan will be signed and disbursed this year. It will strengthen the already strong partnership between France and IFAD, following the EUR 200 million loan granted in 2017 by the French Development Agency.

The past year at IFAD was marked by major operational reforms that will lead to greater effectiveness and efficiency. This dynamic is more necessary than ever, as hunger continues to advance around the world for the third consecutive year.

France supports IFAD's reform efforts, which should facilitate greater financial sustainability, better risk management and intervention mechanisms that better target the needs of beneficiary countries and their rural populations.

Greater collaboration with the private sector will heighten the impact of IFAD's activities, and here I salute the launch of the ABC Fund.

France is very anxious for IFAD loans and grants to maintain their priority of benefitting the poorest and most vulnerable countries and populations. This priority should guide IFAD's reform process and the customization of its financial products.

France expects IFAD to promote inclusive and sustainable agriculture and rural development, where women and youth can make their contribution. It would like to see decisive action to strengthen cross-cutting areas in project portfolios.

These priorities will be given less international attention this year. We hope IFAD will actively contribute to the work of the G7, whose presidency is occupied by France in 2019.

IFAD should also contribute its expertise in the implementation of the recommendations of the G20 Eminent Persons Group, whose work was performed in 2017 and 2018. IFAD has a place in these efforts, which should lead to better coordination of the activities of the multilateral development banks and boost the effectiveness of the entire system.

I also commend IFAD's efforts to strengthen its partnerships with FAO and WFP. In this regard, we are awaiting the plan of action of the three Rome-based United Nations agencies for the Sahel.

Finally, France expects to see substantial IFAD engagement in the United Nations system.

I wish you all a very successful forty-second session of the IFAD Governing Council, with fruitful exchanges and enriching roundtables.