

Statement by the representative of the Republic of Nicaragua

I am honoured to speak to you on this important occasion and would like to take this opportunity to convey a fraternal greeting from our President, Commander Daniel Ortega, our Vice-President, Commander Rosario Murillo and the Nicaraguan people.

The forty-second IFAD Governing Council is taking place in a particularly complex global context. As noted in *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World*, we are witnessing an alarming reversal in the fight against hunger and poverty, while at the same time 2019 is projected to be marked by a significant economic contraction, further exacerbating the situation of the 821 million people living with hunger.

In this situation, it is essential to encourage the adoption of policies and strategies for achieving territorial economic development in which families and communities serve as the guarantors of food security, nutrition and sustainable natural resource management, especially in the most vulnerable populations.

The theme that gathers us here today, "Business innovation and initiatives in the rural world", implies a major shift from a paradigm that prioritises urban systems and consumption on a global scale to a model where development and wealth generation are driven by the local and community sphere.

Investment in technology, innovation and small agricultural business development, with an approach that incorporates the gender approach, resilience to shocks and environmental sustainability, is essential not only for the future of millions of rural households but for the achievement of the SDGs

If all of us put human beings at the centre of everything we do, a just and united world without hunger will be possible.

We know that this will be achievable only if we create the conditions to improve and increase the value added of our farmers' products, upgrading our infrastructure, incentivizing human training and making new technologies affordable.

The Government of Nicaragua has therefore been promoting inclusive, sustainable and coherent policies to tackle humanity's current challenges, including the effects of climate change.

Our production development model is based on the creative and enterprising household economy, which provides more than 70 per cent of the country's employment and accounts for 40 per cent of its GDP.

Public infrastructure investments, education, access to energy, gender equity, youth involvement and the use of new technologies are among the structural policies promoted in our Human Development Plan, which puts human beings at the centre.

Our government has made significant efforts to boost the country's productive capacity, prioritising smallholders, who produce 80 per cent of the country's food and 65 per cent of its livestock products (40 to 45 per cent of our rural population contributes to the economic development of Nicaragua).

In line with this process, it has promoted a series of national rural business initiatives to encourage entrepreneurship, innovation and the rural development of farming families.

These business initiatives focus on areas such as rural tourism, agribusiness, agroindustry, youth entrepreneurship, gastronomy, timber, handicrafts, commerce and services.

We are well aware that sustainable economic development will be possible only with inclusive policies and activities. Thus, gender equity is a priority issue for our government. The participation of Nicaraguan women, especially rural women, in different spheres has enabled the country to meet historic objectives in the fight against hunger and poverty. As noted in the latest report of the World Economic Forum, Nicaragua today ranks first in our region in gender equality and fifth globally.

While Nicaragua is striving to address the current economic and environmental crises, we also consider it fundamental to encourage countries to adopt innovative models for cooperation, complementarity and knowledge sharing, technical assistance and technology transfer.

It is also important to advocate for greater financing from multilateral organizations so that developing countries can implement programmes that quantitatively and qualitatively improve our production, adding greater value to primary production and the entire production chain and thus facilitating speedier access by rural producers to national and international markets.

IFAD therefore continues to be an important partner of Nicaragua, aligning its work closely with our government's strategies to strengthen and develop our rural sector and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

On behalf of my government, I would like to reaffirm Nicaragua's commitment to this Institution, displayed in our participation in the contributions to the Eleventh Replenishment of IFAD's Resources.