

Statement by the representative of the Kingdom of Spain

As we all know, the 2030 Agenda is the international community's new paradigm for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals—that is, shared prosperity, the preservation of the planet and the eradication of hunger and poverty, a paradigm to be implemented through effective, coordinated, integrated action by not only all public actors but public-private partnerships in areas where they have a key role to play.

Within this context, the theme chosen for this forty-second meeting of the IFAD Governing Council is particularly apt: Business innovation and initiatives in the rural world, since it reflects both the need highlighted in the 2030 Agenda to strengthen public-private partnerships and work with business to achieve the SDGs and the call to United Nations agencies to develop effective strategies for increasing collaboration with the private sector.

In this same vein, we find equally appropriate the topics that will be the focus of the Governors' conversations during this meeting—namely, the future of IFAD and its financial structure, relations with the private sector and its positioning in the necessary coordination with the other actors of the United Nations system to promote development.

We therefore support the efforts of President Hounbou to continue furthering the transformation of IFAD to make it an institution capable of providing a critical contribution to the achievement of the SDGs through the design of innovative financing mechanisms, which are much needed but at the same time require a healthy dose of prudence to avoid excessive financial risk.

Thus, during this meeting of the Governing Council, Spain will support the approval of a series of amendments to the Fund's regulations that will enable it in the near future to develop a strategy for collaboration with the private sector, in which the risks inherent to a change of this import in IFAD's business model should also be addressed. In this same vein, we view very positively IFAD's forthcoming collaboration with the European Union through the ABC Fund, which will also be launched during this meeting of the Governing Council.

We furthermore encourage IFAD to continue collaborating closely with the Rome-based United Nations agencies and the rest of the multilateral and bilateral development assistance system to promote partnerships, increase synergies and prevent the duplication of efforts.

We will also support the approval of IFAD's 2019 Annual Work Plan and Budget within the framework of the Eleventh Replenishment 2019-2021 and will continue our active participation in the work of the Executive Board to monitor implementation of the Plan.

In brief, we view very positively IFAD's efforts to achieve rural development that facilitates food security and nutrition, environmental preservation and adaptation to climate change, maintaining a gender approach in all activities as a clear example of the importance of advancing toward the simultaneous achievement of several SDGs.

Spain has supported IFAD's work in alleviating rural poverty and will continue to do so. Spanish cooperation through the Spanish Food Security Cofinancing Facility Trust Fund, managed by IFAD, was a pioneering effort and has made it possible to cofinance 24 development projects in 23 countries with an endowment of EUR 300 million. The Spanish Trust Fund has helped transform IFAD's business model. Some of the projects have already been completed and have had a major impact on the beneficiary populations. This important collaboration between Spain and IFAD is especially relevant today in the framework of SDG 17.

We should add that Spanish Cooperation is working with IFAD on a Framework Agreement to promote the cofinancing of IFAD programmes with bilateral funds for projects with a financing gap. The purpose of the project cofinancing is to heighten the development impact of activities, with Spanish Cooperation following IFAD procedures. The idea is to leverage resources to efficiently finance development projects to meet the most pressing needs in rural areas in both the less developed and middle-income countries.

Finally, I would like to note the success that the European Union's approval of our joint INCLUSIFI initiative with Italian Cooperation has represented for Spanish Cooperation under the European External Investment Plan in Africa, still pending signature of the respective agreements with the Commission, and in which IFAD participates as a strategic technical partner through its Financing Facility for Remittances.

A maximum of EUR 11 million in technical assistance and EUR 20 million in guarantees from the European Fund for Sustainable Development will be available for implementation of this initiative. To this end, a strategy has been developed to help meet the objective of financial inclusion through support for local entrepreneurship, preferably among women and youth, by increasing access to financial services and new financial products channelled through local financial institutions. Here, improved channelling of remittances from emigrants and the promotion of investments by diaspora communities in Europe will play an important role.