

**STATEMENT BY MR. SAMEER KUMAR KHARE, ADDITIONAL SECRETARY,
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INDIA AT THE 43rd SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF IFAD, 11-12
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**Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Governors,
Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is with great pleasure that I present the statement on behalf of the Government of India at this forty-third session of the Governing Council of IFAD.

Time does not stand still in the fight against rural poverty. We, Governments and the development community hoped, in 2015 at their unveiling, that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) would concentrate minds and be the catalyst for the transformation of the lives of the poor throughout the world.

Much has been done. Yet the clock is ticking. We have arrived at the final decade to fulfil our goals and make good on our commitment that we made to the peoples of this world. It is into this final decade of the SDGs that IFAD must stride, with positivity. This is a crucial year for the Fund. It enters the second year of the Eleventh Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD11) with the aims and innovations of the replenishment coming to fruition; and begins its Twelfth Replenishment Consultation process.

The Government of India offers its praise for the way in which the Fund has kept its eye on the ball in its pursuit of its mandate whilst contemporaneously innovating and seeking new ways of working to improve the quality and range of the Fund's operations, for borrowers and donors alike. The efficiency gains and streamlining of the organization, its decentralization – including the opening of a “hub” in India – and its willingness to look for different sources of funding and offer borrowers a variety of products, are evidence of this.

Since its foundation in 1977, the relationship between India and IFAD has been close. IFAD has been a respected partner for the Indian Government in order to tackle rural poverty at home and as a means through which India offers solidarity and a helping hand abroad. The willingness of both parties to see the benefits of such arrangements and think of imaginative means of donor-to-Fund engagement were credible and highlight the deep and special relationship between both parties. Going forward this relationship is expected to only grow stronger.

Indeed, India upped its contribution to IFAD11 and provided IFAD with its first concessional partner loan. It proved the Government's backing for the institutional changes that IFAD was making - even in a dynamic and competitive donor environment. As the IFAD12 Consultation meets throughout the year, the Government of India looks forward to actively engaging in the process and offers the Fund its best wishes for fruitful and robust dialogue between it and its Member States for the year ahead.

This year's overarching theme for the Governing Council – Investing in sustainable food systems to end hunger by 2030 – is extremely relevant and supported by the Government of India. It captures key aspects of the development programme which will be key to achieving the SDGs by 2030, by adopting holistic approaches combined with a commitment to sustainability for long-term benefit.

India, with the world's 17 percent of the population, holds the key to global SDG achievement. The Government of India is fully committed to its resolve to achieve the SDGs and their related targets by 2030. To harmonise India's national development priorities with international efforts, the Government of India has taken several initiatives. India has aligned development policies and schemes of State and Central Governments sectors to achieve the SDGs. The Schemes are collectively expected to deliver on the corresponding SDG goal.

In India, the agricultural sector has witnessed great change over the past few years, with the Government recognizing that inclusive agricultural development is a supremely effective way for bringing its poorest rural citizens out of poverty. The Indian Government has been investing to increase agriculture productivity in a sustainable manner. For instance, the Government has been implementing a multi-faceted strategy for doubling farmers' income. 221 million soil health cards have been distributed so far to farmers to help rationalise the use of fertilisers.

Government of India has adopted several measures for sustainable development of agriculture so as to achieve food security and end hunger. The approach is comprehensive, with well-planned development programmes and schemes being implemented to strengthen all verticals including production, procurement and distribution. Some of these include:

- (a) **Adopting an Integrated Farming System Approach** to increase farm yield and production, and manage resources through innovation in farming, effective recycling of farm waste for productive purposes, community led local systems for water conservation, organic farming and judicious mix of income generating activities such as dairy, poultry, fishery, goat rearing, vermi-composting and others.
- (b) **Encouraging Sustainable use of natural resources**, majorly soil and water through implementation of schemes like the Prime Minister Irrigation Scheme (Pradhan Mantri

Krishi Sinchai Yojana) – per drop more crop – for enhancing water use efficiency. Micro irrigation for efficient water application system such as drip and sprinkler irrigation systems are promoted. Besides micro water storage structures, drought proofing and ground water replenishment measures are also promoted for supplementary micro irrigation.

- (c) **Adoption of improved climate resilient technologies** to enhance resilience of India agriculture to climate change.
- (d) **Implementation of better procurement and equitable distribution** through a revamped Public Distribution System under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013 has been phenomenal and achieving the objective. The NFSA adopts a life cycle approach making special provisions for ensuring food security of pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children from 6 months to 14 years of age. The National Nutrition Mission (*Poshan Abhiyaan*), a multi-ministerial convergence mission was launched in 2018 to make a concerted attack on under-nutrition, stunting, and anaemia.
- (e) Enhanced income generation through recently launched development programmes and schemes to achieve the target of **Doubling Farmers Income by 2022**.
- (f) Greater use of technology and digital mediums across the board to overcome operational inefficiencies. For instance, in order to ensure remunerative prices to farmers, market reforms like formation of Farmers-Producers Organisations and creation of web portals like e-NAMs are being implemented.

India appreciates IFAD's niche and strengths – as an organization with a solid base and track record in supporting sustainable, inclusive, nutritious and efficient food systems; and also its alignment with Government of India's priorities as outlined above. India stands ready and committed to support IFAD in achieving the goals particularly in the fulfilling the aim of eliminating hunger – SDG 2 and also confronting the challenges of the coming decade.

I wish you all a successful and stimulating Governing Council session.