

STATEMENT
Of the
Republic of South Africa



43rd Session of the Governing Council
Of the
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).
11 – 12 February 2020
Rome, Italy,

Mr President,

The South African Government takes this opportunity to reaffirm its continued support and commitment to the efforts led by IFAD to reduce poverty and food insecurity in rural areas through its programmes in agriculture and rural development. The shared mandate between IFAD and its member states in achieving SDG2 is of paramount importance.

South Africa has made significant strides in promoting food security and the domestication of international indicators on food security to track progress nationally. Informed by the Constitution, in which the right to food is enshrined, the Government of the Republic of South Africa is committed to the progressive realisation of this inalienable right. Our collective efforts in achieving zero hunger as members of IFAD can only begin in earnest, if we are to recognize the importance of the right to food.

Mr President,

The biggest challenge facing South Africa is to find a balanced approach to support the transition to sustainable and reformed food systems by mainstreaming a cadre of young farmers in the system for continuity, because South Africa currently has an ageing cohort of farmers. Such an approach can go a long way in implementing solutions aimed at strengthening the resilience and sustainability of food systems in South Africa.

Mr President,

The National Development Plan (NDP – Vision 2030), the lodestar to the achievement of South Africa's priorities, recognises agricultural productivity and rural development among the essential priorities for the creation of employment, economic growth, reducing poverty and promoting food security in South Africa. The NDP calls for an inclusive rural economy wherein the meaningful participation of rural communities in the political, economic and social sphere is ensured. South Africa firmly believes that access to high-quality basic services that enable members of rural communities to be well nourished; healthy and increasingly skilled coupled with successful land reform strategies, should therefore be at the forefront of our efforts.

The establishment of the IFAD Country Office in South Africa is further warmly welcomed and would serve to solidify and strengthen the strategic relationship between our country and IFAD. Through working together we can progressively realise the bold yet essential objective of achieving zero hunger based on inclusive rural development with a people-centred approach grounded on a sustainable and efficient agricultural sector.

Mr President,

It is reported that about 1.3 billion tonnes of all world food intended for human consumption is wasted. This quantity is enough to feed about 3 billion people per year. South Africa has taken bold steps towards a shift in the food systems reform and recognizes the need to increase commercialization of the circular economy and create value from resources currently discarded as waste. South Africa further recognizes that there are opportunities for value recovery, beneficiation, job creation and economic development in the waste sector, including food waste.

To conclude Mr President, the domain in which we operate remains dynamic and challenging. The power imbalances in the global agricultural and food trade regime may present obstacles to the realization of national and global food and nutrition security objectives. In order to develop effective responses to the changes and challenges with which we are confronted and to develop fair and equitable solutions to ensure that we remain on track in achieving the 2030 SDGs, a steadfast commitment to multilateralism is required.