

COUNTRY STATEMENT TO THE 43rd IFAD GOVERNING COUNCIL: RWANDA

- **Chairperson,**
- **The President of IFAD,**
- **Distinguished Governors,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is my privilege and great honour to attend this 43rd IFAD Governing Council on behalf of my Country, Rwanda. I bring to you warm greetings from the people and the Government of Rwanda in general and in particular from our President, **His Excellency Paul Kagame**.

Chairperson,

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to IFAD and the organizers of this event who have chosen the theme: **Investing in sustainable food systems to end hunger by 2030** which is very relevant globally but especially to my Country. It is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as with **Rwanda Vision 2050;**

Rwanda is a landlocked Country with a population density nearing 500 per square km and average land size of about 0.33 ha. The Country is mountainous with fragile soils and more than 70% of the population engaged in agricultural activities. This makes investing in sustainable food systems very relevant.

However, the Government of Rwanda has made efforts to deal with these challenges by placing a lot of emphasis on soil and water management to ensure not only increased productivity but also sustainable agriculture.

Food production in Rwanda is based on small family holding and previously farmers tended to grow all the food needs in these small units in such a way that one small unit would be growing about 5 different crops needed for family consumption. However, the Government through the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources has encouraged these small scale farmers to aggregate these small units into economically productive larger units. This has resulted in increased production with farmers having surplus for the market.

Hillside terracing and water management in low lands have been intensified in order to curb the degradation of this scarce resource. Most agricultural programmes and projects have focused on this aspect in order to make food production sustainable.

Another element that has been focused is the protection of the environment. In Rwanda, these small scale farmers integrate crop production with animal production. With one cow per family programme known as Girinka, farmers are able to utilize cow to provide milk, money, also as a source of manure for the crops and some use biogas for cooking and lighting. Most projects currently have aspects of environment protection.

Since sustainable food systems involves both natural and human factors, Rwanda has put in place mechanisms to train farmers and other stakeholders in all aspects of food chain from production to consumption.

The youth have also been encouraged to engage in food production. In Rwanda, we have the Rwanda Youth in Agribusiness Forum (RYAF) which is a platform that brings together different youth organizations, individual youth farmers and entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector along the value chain.

This platform aims at encouraging the youth to change the mind set of looking for white collar jobs, which are limited in any case, and engage in Agribusiness using modern technologies which they have learnt at schools. For example, Rwanda has started using drones in agriculture and these are some of the new technologies that shall attract the youth into agriculture.

I would like to thank IFAD for the support it has provided to deal with food production and protection of the environment. All past and current projects have had an impact on sustainable food production. Specifically the new project, namely, Kayonza Irrigation and Integrated Watershed Management Project – Phase I (KIIWP 1) shall aim at improving food security and incomes of 50,000 rural households on a sustainable basis and build their climate resilience. KIIWP will improve the resilience of small smallholder farmers to droughts and effects of climate change through increased levels of production of selected food and cash crops, livestock and improved market access and business development.

KIIWP shall also develop sustainable, profitable and intensive small scale agricultural activities through Public Private Producers Partnerships (4Ps) which is in line with the theme of 43rd Governing Council.

**Chairperson,
Mr. President
Distinguished Governors
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would take this opportunity to thank all of the development partners and especially IFAD for the continuous support given to Rwanda in its endeavor to attain its goals imbedded in our Vision 2050.

I thank you