

Statement by the representative of the Republic of the Sudan

As this session of the Governing Council of the International Fund for Agricultural Development convenes, Sudan is moving confidently on the path set following the December revolution to achieve the hopes and aspirations of all segments of the Sudanese people by laying the groundwork for peace, development, prosperity and a decent life in line with the revolution's call for freedom, peace and justice. Believing in the importance of peace as a basis for achieving sustainable development and stability, the transitional government is continuing to negotiate with all opposition factions in the capitals of neighbouring countries. The negotiations have resulted in a clear breakthrough for the parties. The mutual trust between the parties has facilitated real gains in humanitarian work, enabling international organizations for the first time to visit conflict areas in South Kordofan and south Blue Nile. In this regard, Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, together with Abdulaziz al-Helou, Head of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement - Northern Sector, made an important visit to the Kadu region, accompanied by the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, David Beasley, who also visited Yabus in south Blue Nile. These visits come in the wake of sweeping changes in attitudes toward dealing with the international community and with international and humanitarian organizations.

The transitional government has worked to align its national development priorities and plans with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly as these goals are concerned with vulnerable groups and the rural population. In this regard, the government is working to fight poverty, end hunger and provide basic services, especially health and education services. The transitional government attaches the highest importance to transforming plant and animal agriculture to enable it to better support economic growth and stability. This will be accomplished through structural, financial, and legislative reforms that encourage the processing industries and add value to our national products. The transitional government also seeks to create more jobs for young people. It is helping small-scale producers and smallholders by organizing them into producer associations under the Agricultural and Animal Production Professionals Act, and it is encouraging the establishment of agricultural cooperative associations. It is also working to enact laws to increase funding for rural development and to establish an agricultural development and food security support fund.

Sudan was fortunate to recently receive a grant and a loan from IFAD totalling EUR 77.7 million for the Sustainable Natural Resources and Livelihoods Programme. The programme targets enhanced food security and access to natural resources. It is a vital investment in the future of Sudan, where more than 80 per cent of the labour force is involved in agriculture. The programme will benefit 720,000 smallholder farmers, herders and farmer-herders in nine states spanning three Sudanese regions, helping them adapt to climate change and to manage natural resources. In this regard, the programme will enhance the country's resilience in dealing with rainfall variability due to climate change, which directly affects rainfed agriculture, negatively impacting livelihoods and food security. The programme will also help smallholders manage natural resources so as to improve their agricultural activities and income, give them access to improved feed and animal health services and diversify their livelihoods.

In this same context, the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the transitional government in general are holding intensive talks with development partners at the national, regional, and international levels to urge them to contribute to the government's efforts to increase the utilization of available resources and build resilience to human and natural threats to agricultural output. The government attaches major importance to climate change and is developing comprehensive plans with international partners to protect the environment and adapt to climate change. These plans include the National Climate Adaptation Plan and the National Plan to Combat Desertification.

Therefore, affirming the commitment of the Sudan to fulfil its national obligations to contribute to achieving sustainable rural development based on the country's natural and human resources, we call upon the international community and its specialized agencies, especially the Rome-based Agencies, to contribute financial resources for implementing the reforms needed in this important sector. We also look forward to more support from IFAD for the government's plans and priorities for rehabilitating the plant and animal agricultural sector and boosting agriculture's GNP share through value chains, the combatting of poverty, the employment of youth, the integration of women in the agricultural production process, and investments in rural areas.

In conclusion, on behalf of my government, I am pleased to renew my thanks to Mr Gilbert Hounbo, President of IFAD, and the entire staff of the Fund for the Fund's continuing support of Sudan since 1979 and the interest and willingness shown recently by Mr Hounbo to help the Sudanese Government during the transitional period take advantage of its agricultural capacities, which can be enhanced to realize the long-standing dream of the Sudan becoming the bread basket of the region. We hope that Sudan will have the honour of a visit by His Excellency the President of the Fund in the near future. We highly value the Fund's role in supporting agricultural and rural development in many parts of the world at a time when the world is witnessing momentous environmental, economic and political transformations.

Thank you for your attention. I hope that this session of the Fund's Governing Council will produce mutually agreeable recommendations and visions for meeting the major rural development challenges facing the world and for supporting the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals.