

**Statement of the Syrian Arab Republic at the 43rd Session
Meeting of IFAD Governing Council
(Rome, 11-12/2/2020)**

His Excellency Mr. Gilbert Hougbo, President of IFAD;

Their Excellences, Ministers and IFAD Governors;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I have the pleasure to represent the Syrian Arab Republic at the "43rd Session Meeting of IFAD Governing Council", which is considered an important platform that contributes to the activation of efforts and establishment of agriculture and food plans and priorities under the emergent challenges. It is also an opportunity for the representatives of the member countries to discuss food security issues by exchanging various viewpoints among the participating organizations.

Please allow me first to extend my deep thanks to His Excellency Mr. Gilbert Hougbo, President of IFAD, for his kind invitation to this meeting; a fact that proves IFAD's confidence in the exerted efforts and continuous seeking of the Syrian Arab Republic to contribute, with all the available potentials, to the agricultural sector development and livelihood improvement of the rural households. Such efforts comply with IFAD's message and approach in achieving its development goals. I would like also to thank all the workers of IFAD for their great sincere efforts to rise up with IFAD's work and goals in the development process, especially in the developing countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

During the past decades, IFAD has exerted great efforts to achieve its development goals in the economic and social fields. It has persistently and determinately worked to prove the validity of its adopted methodology and framework actuality to implement the development

programs of poverty and hunger control, particularly in the poorest rural areas.

The fruitful cooperation between the Syrian Arab Republic and IFAD goes back to more than 35 years. During this period, high-level great success stories have been achieved by implementing several pilot projects that had positive impacts on a wide segment of population. The first generation of these projects concentrated on agricultural development and land reclamation to cultivate the different species of crops and fruit trees (reaching a number of 227 million trees until 2011). The second generation of these projects, on the other hand, was concerned with empowering poor smallholder farmers, breeders and rural women; the recent project of which was the Integrated Livestock Development Project, which had good results that contributed to the productivity increase and rural households' living standard improvement, as the number of beneficiaries, up to the suspension date in the mid of 2015, reached (20000).

Despite all the difficult and hard circumstances and situations that were caused by the terrorist war, the Syrian government paid a special attention to the agricultural sector. This sector was a priority in the economic development programs in order to achieve integrated development, develop rural areas and conserve natural resources. The government continued to provide all the potential assistance to support the resilience and stability of farmers, breeders and crisis-affected people, and allocated high funds for implementing a big number of development projects, among of which was the Integrated Livestock Development Project which continued its activities by a governmental support despite the financing suspension, as the number of beneficiaries reached (68000) by the end of 2019.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The rural population in Syria, who have suffered the terrorist war's consequences and damages in their agricultural lands (including the destruction of infrastructure, wells and irrigation networks and the cutting and burning of about 20 million trees), are looking forward to activate IFAD's work and expand its activities to cover all Syrian

governorates. These activities will contribute to rehabilitating these areas and restoring agricultural sector productivity and development on one hand, and alleviating the suffering of poor rural households, improving their living standards and helping them to return and settle in their villages on the other, especially after getting back security in most Syrian geographical areas. The importance of implementing new development programs lies in improving livelihoods and enhancing food security of rural households, working on economic-social infrastructure rehabilitation and rebuilding the capacities of rural communities and agricultural institutions, especially that Syria today is entering a new phase of recovery, reconstruction and population's return to their villages. This necessitates taking responsibility to provide all the available potentials to support the requirements of returnees' resilience and enhance their adaptive capacities.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Our environment witnesses today big climatic changes contributing to water resource shortage, desertification expansion, green area regression, and degradation of soil, fresh water, oceans and biodiversity, which forms an additional pressure on the available resources.

Therefore, a lot of efforts should be exerted to ensure the sustainability and optimal use of these resources to be able to eradicate hunger by 2030; which is considered a basic prerequisite and roadmap to achieve other SDGs.

For the purpose of ensuring a sufficient food for every inhabitant, we should promote investment in sustainable food systems and fields of technology, sciences and innovations, and enhance policies that support these objectives to ensure meeting the future requirements of food and nutrition.

We should work on achieving sustainable agricultural production through motivating and helping farmers to use good agricultural practices, controlling agricultural pesticide and fertilizer uses due to their negative impact on food safety and groundwater pollution, rationalizing natural resources, especially water resources, delivering modern technology to smallholder farmers and encouraging strong

partnerships between the public and private sectors, due to their big importance in terms of promoting the establishment of successful sustainable food systems, supporting economic growth and meeting food and nutrition requirements under better health conditions.

Accordingly, we can realize the importance and role of IFAD and other international organizations in exerting their efforts to achieve the maximum use of the available resources aiming at achieving our food security.

In conclusion, we look forward to more constructive and fruitful cooperation with IFAD, and hope to continue our mutual efforts to implement new projects that could contribute to improving the livelihoods of rural households and help them to settle in their villages and restore the productive process.

Hoping to achieve success in our works and perform highly-effective achievements in alleviating the impacts and consequences of crises on the peoples of the world as a whole.

Thank you and may peace be with you