

Statement by the representative of the Republic of Yemen

I am pleased to address you on behalf of the Republic of Yemen at this 43rd session of the Governing Council of the International Fund for Agricultural Development. Unfortunately, this meeting comes as my country continues to experience tragic conditions and protracted crises. The repercussions of the current crisis brought on by the coup against the government are serious. They include financial instability, economic collapse, high food prices and a public budget deficit that has led to reduced government expenditures and delays of several months in the payment – if at all – of government employees' salaries since September 2016. Youth unemployment is high and the national currency has collapsed. We are experiencing extreme poverty, malnutrition and an ongoing increase in hunger, which is to say severe food insecurity. In this regard, women and children are the most vulnerable and fragile groups and should be prioritized.

As a result of the preceding and other complex challenges, our country is facing the largest humanitarian crisis the world has known. Many international organizations report that more than two-thirds of the population require urgent humanitarian assistance. Cooperation is needed not only to provide emergency relief but also to build resilience in the agricultural sector, which is one of the most important sectors in Yemen and one of the most affected by the current crisis.

The agricultural sector is a leading sector in the national economy. More than 75 per cent of the population depend on agriculture for their livelihood and 60 per cent of the labour force works in agriculture. Conflicts and protracted crises have adversely affected the agricultural sector, reducing productivity and preventing farmers from reaching or using their fields, which has disrupted the agricultural production cycle and increased food insecurity.

It has become imperative for us to unite and coordinate our efforts to support the agricultural sector and enable it to deal with these manifold major challenges and help eliminate severe food insecurity in our country. Here, we stress the importance of linking relief projects to development projects and peacebuilding, which is fully compatible with the theme of this session, "Investing in Sustainable Food Systems to End Hunger by 2030". For these reasons, we reaffirm the importance of IFAD resuming its activities in our country. We also affirm our country's commitment to working and coordinating to facilitate IFAD's return to Yemen. Before the current crisis, Yemen was exemplary in its commitment to paying its dues and contributions to the Fund's resources, despite its limited resources before the war. Even though the Fund has invoked force majeure to suspend all of its projects in Yemen, our country has continued to pay its obligations, and this should be an incentive for the Fund's treatment of Yemen based on a more special approach that takes into account all of these factors and expedites the Fund's resumption of its activities.

I would like to express our country's confidence in the importance of promptly resuming the Fund's work after an agreement is reached on the settlement of loan arrears. Finally, I would like to underscore the importance of the Rural Growth Project and other scheduled projects, which are instrumental for reducing poverty, facilitating investment in food systems and ending food insecurity and fragility.

In conclusion, we commend the agenda topics and interactive sessions, and we wish the session every success.