

STATEMENT BY

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Mr. Chairman

Mr. President

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the current chairman for his election and for handling the chair professionally.

Distinguished Delegates:

During the last conference, we barely escaped the spread of the pandemic which is today claiming well over 2 million lives, over one hundred million cases and a terrible economic downturn.

The global agricultural performance in general and that of Africa in particular which was supposed to provide the required food and nutrition to the respective population have also been hard hit. With regard to the public health, which is the primary victim of the pandemic, Africa's meager health facilities are terribly overcrowded, to say the least.

However, no matter how bleak the situation is, we can always find opportunities within the challenge. One noticeable dividend is the focus that is being given to technology, digital communication, urban agriculture with emphasis to vertical agriculture, hydroponics and aquaponics using vermiculture. Focusing on small, efficient and intensive agriculture and aquaculture with fast and productive means.

In Eritrea, we have stated these small, intensive and integrated packages since 2013. We call this "The Minimum Integrated Household, Agricultural Package (MIHAP). This package is as small as one quarter of a hectare where staple crops, animal forage, vegetables and fruits are grown along with a dairy

cow, bee hives and chicken to produce enough milk, eggs, honey and the other products for the respective household plus four others. At this juncture, I am happy to announce that IFAD was forthcoming from the beginning and the contribution was significant ever since. I would also like to express my profound gratitude to IFAD's significant allocation to Eritrea during the current replenishment.

Distinguished Delegates:

As is true in every country, farmers are very much impacted by restricted movement of people and goods imposed by COVID. Business as usual in production, transportation and marketing is highly compromised. In this regard IFAD's gesture to cushion the thrust through RPSF is a welcome development.

In conclusion I congratulate IFAD for holding a productive meeting under the current circumstance and hope that member countries will compare notes and share success stories in order to undertake nutrition sensitive agriculture.

