

**Video statement by HoD Alexandra Valkenburg**  
**IFAD Governing Council, 17/18 February 2021, Rome**

It is my pleasure to address the IFAD's 44<sup>th</sup> Governing Council on behalf of the EU.

I congratulate President Hounbo, his staff and IFAD Governors for the excellent outcome of IFAD's 12th replenishment. The agreed package will create a promising path for IFAD and through its increased financial firepower it can support bold and promising investments, to the benefit of smallholder and family farmers, farmers' organisations and agripreneurs.

From the EU's own experience, we know that fostering rural investments is difficult and complex. This is why many other development finance institutions and commercial lenders shy away from that space. This is why IFAD is so important for the "last mile investments" to support farmers to increase their productivity and incomes, to become stronger stakeholders in fair and integrated value chains and to gain better access to markets.

We welcome the strong mainstreaming focus on climate, gender, youth, and nutrition to build resilience to shocks, including to those we currently witness triggered by the pandemic.

2021 is the International Year for eliminating child labour and we expect IFAD to support that goal in all its undertakings.

The EU considers IFAD its prime partner for promoting agricultural investments. Our 377 million EUR portfolio with IFAD since 2011 focuses amongst others on:

1. farmers organisations and IFAD's Farmers Forums,
2. the Agri-Business Capital (or: "ABC") Fund and various other agribusiness funds at country level;
3. transparent and functional land governance and tenure systems;
4. the Platform for Remittances, Investments and Migrants' Entrepreneurship in Africa;
5. the systematic integration of gender transformative approaches ;
6. research, including applied research for nutrition, sustainable agriculture and resilience.

The UN Secretary General has called for the Food Systems Summit in 2021 to raise global awareness and trigger game-changing initiatives; he calls us to take a holistic approach to food systems and their impact on human, animal, plant and planetary health. IFAD has been rightly designated as the UN anchor for Action Track 4 to advance equitable livelihoods. This requires IFAD's full and sustained engagement, now and after the Summit, which we expect to be just the kick-off of a long-term transformative endeavour.

Thank you for your attention!