

**Statement by the Nordic countries Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden
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Global Situation calls for reassessment and reversing the course

Despite our common efforts, hunger and food insecurity continue to rise. In recent years, the number of hungry people has increased due to prolonged conflicts, climate change and disasters, combined with economic downturns. Moreover, there is a persistent structural problem of deep poverty and increasing inequality of wealth distribution.

COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the situation and led to significant setbacks, erasing development gains. The increasing debt burden in low- and middle-income countries is now making it difficult for them to invest in improving and recovering their economies. As a result, safeguarding lives and livelihoods has become extremely difficult, especially for the most vulnerable people.

More than ever before, it has become necessary to reassess the pathway, change course and reset the direction towards a world without hunger and food insecurity. In this context, IFAD has a unique role to play in the international development architecture.

The Nordic countries strongly support IFAD's mandate focusing on the poorest and most vulnerable people in the fragile and remote areas. We fully endorse IFAD's core mission to work with and for the rural poor in developing countries, leaving no one behind, through investments in inclusive rural transformation and in resilient and sustainable food systems.

We underscore the importance of producing development results on the ground, where they matter most. We encourage IFAD to further strengthen its collaboration and coordination with the other Rome-based agencies, UN agencies and international financial institutions. In order to contribute to the UN system-wide development outcomes, it is vital that IFAD continues to implement the UN Development System Reform, UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and the Common Country Analysis.

Support to the Reform Agenda

The IFAD-12 replenishment round is a critical milestone as it marks the culmination of several important reforms. Over the last years, IFAD has made major progress on improving its financial architecture and business model, including decentralization of country offices, reforming the Debt Sustainability Framework, and development of a Liquidity Policy and an Integrated Borrowing Framework. These reforms will help IFAD strengthen its financial sustainability and diversify its resource base. We congratulate IFAD for the two successful credit ratings, opening up a range of new opportunities for the organization.

The Nordic countries have actively supported IFAD's ambitious reform agenda. Our satisfaction with the progress made and the ambitions ahead is reflected in our support for IFAD-12, including our collective record high financial pledge. We would like to express our appreciation for the IFAD-12 result management framework, policy outcomes and agreed financial scenario. We trust that IFAD will now work to ensure higher sustainability in results in all mainstreaming areas and to consolidate the ongoing reform agenda to ensure adequate policy engagement in the field.

We are pleased that in the future IFAD will allocate an increased amount of core resources to low-income and lower-middle income countries, and apply a graduation policy that reflects countries' changing economic realities.

We commend IFAD's efforts to deepen its impact on four mainstreaming themes, including environment and climate, gender, nutrition and youth and urge IFAD to translate the high levels of ambition to concrete actions. We particularly stress the importance of IFAD fulfilling its commitment to gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment.

When moving forward, we wish to see IFAD stepping up its efforts to embed the rights of Persons with Disabilities and Indigenous Peoples more systematically into IFAD's work, as well to increase its focus on biodiversity and ecosystem services in the context of transformative country programmes.

IFAD-12 also marks a turning point in IFAD's engagement with the private sector. The Private Sector Financing Programme (PSFP) is IFAD's first program focusing solely on catalysing direct private sector investments into small producers and rural poor. We express our strong support to IFAD's private sector engagement, as strengthening the private sector is the key for creating more jobs, especially for young people and building resilience and stability in fragile states.

Sustainable food systems to end hunger by 2030

In their present form, food systems are failing to ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all people. Significant changes are urgently required in the way we produce, process and consume food, in order to feed the world in a more sustainable way.

If done in the right way, transforming the food systems can also help us address some of the most pressing global challenges going beyond food security, including climate change, loss of biodiversity, gender equality and global health challenges.

The Nordic countries recognize climate change as one of the primary drivers of hunger and poverty, undermining food security and livelihoods of rural people. Smallholder farmers – many of them women - are on the frontline of the fight against climate change.

With its increased target for climate change finance, IFAD is well positioned to ensure that rural communities receive the support and finance they need to adapt to climate change and to build climate-resilient agriculture, food production and sustainable value chains. We commend IFAD's enhanced Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP+) and express our strong support to IFAD's investments in climate-focused mitigation, adaptation and resilience building.

Food System Summit must generate concrete solutions

In a context where the global community urgently needs to identify effective ways to tackle hunger, poverty and climate crisis, international collaboration and effective multilateralism is not a choice, but a necessity. The Nordic countries welcome the Secretary General's Food Systems Summit, with the aim of revitalising collective action towards more sustainable patterns of production and consumption.

We are looking forward to a Solutions summit, which can deliver results on the ground and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Summit must generate concrete actions and solid commitments to transform our food systems. With IFAD as the designated UN Anchor Agency for Action Track 4, we have a golden opportunity to put the small-scale farmers and rural people at the heart of the achieving the SDGs.

Words of Appreciation

Finally, we would like to express our sincere appreciation for President Houngbo's strong and principled leadership over the last four years, enabling progress on far-reaching reforms, while staying true to IFAD's core mission. We also thank the IFAD management and staff for their outstanding work in carrying IFAD's important mandate to serve the poor.

Thank you!