

COUNTRY STATEMENT TO THE 44th IFAD GOVERNING COUNCIL: RWANDA

- **Chairperson,**
- **The President of IFAD,**
- **Distinguished Governors,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is my great honour and privilege to attend this 44th session of IFAD Governing Council on behalf of my Country, Rwanda. I convey to you warm greetings from the people and the Government of Rwanda in general and from our President, **His Excellency Paul Kagame** in particular.

Chairperson,

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to IFAD and the organizers of this session who have selected the theme: **Rural development: a prerequisite for global resilience** which is very appropriate globally but more especially to my Country, Rwanda. It is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and of course with **Rwanda's Vision 2050**.

Rwanda is a landlocked Country with a population density of slightly more than 500 per Km² and an average land size of about ha 0.33. The Country is hilly with delicate soils and more than 70% of the population engaged in agricultural practices. Therefore, this makes investing in sustainable food systems very relevant and viable.

However, the Government of Rwanda has made efforts to deal with these challenges by greatly focusing on supporting the transformation of rural settings and the empowerment of rural women and youth which can build the foundation for global resilience, especially in this complex context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Government of Rwanda has developed a wide range of strategic and policy documents with an inclusive rural development components to guide the implementation of priorities under the Agricultural sector. These encompass a wide range of gender and youth mainstreaming actions in addition to other arrangements related to other mainstreaming themes such as environment, climate change and capacity building. For instance, the Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation-Phase 4, seeks to enabling rural transformation across its different thematic areas such as improving productivity and production in order to improve the livelihoods and income generation among rural smallholder farmers, addressing gender imbalance, sustainable national resources management & climate change, malnutrition.

The Country collaborates with various International Development Partners at different levels to address the issues of rural development as an apparatus for building a resilient society.

The Government of Rwanda has adopted the use of agricultural development agenda as an instrument for rural development whereby over the last years the budget allocation to the sector has been significantly increased in an effort to allow a smooth implementation of strategic actions including alleviation of gender and youth disparities, increasing productivity and incomes for all.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, through collaboration with its partners has formulated effective programmes and projects aimed at implementing sector strategic actions under the theme of rural development. These include among others; (i) One cow per family programme aimed at stimulating an inclusive rural development whereby poor households within our communities are selected and given cows in order to stimulate their socio-economic development, alleviate the issue of malnutrition especially among children; (ii) National agriculture insurance scheme aimed at reducing vulnerability of farmers due to the effects of climate change; (iii) Agricultural guarantee targeting youth and women and other vulnerable groups in rural areas targeting to alleviate the issue of limited access to finance among rural women and youth due to the lack of collateral security; (iv) Strategic Grain Reserve programme with the objective to ensure food security throughout the year, especially to the most vulnerable households; (v) Small scale Irrigation development Schemes such that the smallholder farmers living in drought prone areas are provided with both technical and financial support in order to invest in Irrigation infrastructures and equipment.

Furthermore, IFAD has been an instrument towards rural development in Rwanda through such projects as; (i) KWAMP Project which has significantly contributed to an inclusive rural development in Kirehe District; (ii) PASP Project which has considerably contributed to improving livelihoods and incomes among rural people throughout supporting investments in Post-harvest handling & Support, processing and transformation in order to obtain a higher share of income from their production; (iii) PRICE-Project which has potentially increased the level of resiliency among rural people throughout linking them to export market in order to earn a higher share of income from their cash crop production; (iv) RDDP Project which is also significantly increasing the level of dairy farmer resilience among rural communities; (v) KIIWP Project which is currently contributing to rural development in drought prone Kayonza District by improving food security and incomes of needy households on a sustainable basis and build their climate resilience; (vi) RPSF Project which was designed to support the smallholder farmers to mitigate COVID-19 pandemic related shocks by improving their food security, resilience and livelihood status; (vii) PRISM Project that will improve food security and nutritional security and incomes of poor households through better performance of small livestock value chains and enhance their resilience.

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In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the development partners and especially IFAD for the continued support to Rwanda in its endeavor to unlock its full potential as well as attaining its goals imbedded in our Vision 2050.

I thank you very much for your kind attention.