

44th Governing Council of IFAD 17-18 February 2021 Country Statement – Sri Lanka

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Governors,
Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I make this statement on behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka at this forty fourth session of the Governing Council of IFAD. Sri Lanka is deeply appreciative of IFAD's continued active role in global development discourse amidst demanding and challenging environments around the world.

Mr President,

An unfamiliar 'new normal', characterized by multiple uncertainties and socio-economic challenges has become the order of the day, worldwide. The global pandemic is causing further changes to the global socio-economic landscape with many countries still in lockdown mode. The trends and socio-economic data which are used for setting targets and strategies have changed significantly.

Covid 19 pandemic has tested our vulnerability and shown us the value of prompt action and resilience. Sri Lanka while successfully containing the spread of COVID-19 through a balanced, multi-sectoral approach, was able to demonstrate its commitment to the democratic processes. In its efforts to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the measures taken by the Government have been inclusive, non-discriminatory and holistic, providing foremost importance to safeguarding the health and safety of its people. Sri Lanka has commenced its COVID 19 vaccination drive and is now in the process of making logistical arrangements for vaccination of over 30 age and above of the population. However, accelerating progress towards achieving 2030 agenda within next decade will depend mostly on our socio-economic resilience.

Massive job losses and increase of poverty are anticipated in the Asia and Pacific region. In Sri Lanka, daily wage earners, Micro Small and Medium Enterprises and informal sector workers that account for more than 50% of the labour force, is highly vulnerable to the impacts of the pandemic.

In this context, I observed IFAD's approach to pursue investment in the rural sector with a view to creating the livelihood opportunities in rural areas, is timely and constructive effort. I am pleased to note that the programmes implemented under the IFAD in Sri Lanka has contributed a lot to improve the expectations of both the Government and the people in the country for a more promising outcome in the future.

Mr President,

Ladies, and Gentlemen,

This year's overarching theme for the Governing Council "Rural Development- a prerequisite for global resilience" is timely relevant and supported by the Government of Sri Lanka. It captures key aspects of the development programme which will be key to achieving the SDG's by 2030, by adopting holistic approaches combined with a commitment to sustainability to long term benefit. Sustainable rural development is vital to the economic, social and environmental viability of the nations and also essential for poverty eradication. Further, Rural livelihoods are enhanced through effective participation of rural people and rural communities in the management of their own, social, economic and environmental objectives by empowering people in rural area particularly women and youth.

To harmonize Sri Lanka's national development priorities with this international efforts, the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) has already taken necessary steps by incorporating the SDGs into its policies to constitute a coherent and collective vision of a better future. The National Policy Framework- 'Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour', a programme of actions aiming to achieve a fourfold outcome: a productive citizenry, a happy family, a disciplined society and a prosperous nation, while addressing the rural development as a key strategic intervention.

The Government policy document also identify policy directives which would be able to achieve sustainable development goals while minimizing the inequality and eliminating poverty, improving people's health and lifestyle through the promotion of appropriate agriculture practices particularly addressing rural women and youth. Further, it addresses providing good education for all, making clean drinking water and cost – effective energy, giving due recognition for safeguarding the benefits of the industrial revolution and maximizing the use of information

technology. In line with that the key development theme of the Medium Term Budgetary Framework is “Inclusive growth” as desired by the people of the country.

However, with the unprecedented - implication of COVID 19 pandemic, every country Including Sri Lanka has compelled to set new baseline for achieving the 2030 Agenda. In this context, Sri Lanka has re-oriented its development framework to address the development issues including the expansion of health services to safeguard its people effectively and the pandemic has already limited the fiscal space for accommodating new emerging and recurring activities, while looking for domestic sources. Sri Lanka needs IFAD’s support and cooperation for achieving its goals leaving no one behind, nationally and internationally.

We are looking forward to work with IFAD closely to strengthen the capacity of our rural communities.

I wish you all a successful and productive Governing Council Session.