

**STATEMENT BY THE GOVERNOR OF CUBA,
RODRIGO MALMERCA DIAZ,
45TH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS OF THE
INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (IFAD),
ROME, FEBRUARY 16, 2022**

His Excellency Mr. Gilbert Hounbo:

There is an urgent need to harness innovation and finance for an inclusive climate-resilient recovery.

The new Constitution of the Republic of Cuba, approved by popular referendum in 2019, includes direct references to Science, Technology and Innovation activities, as essential elements for the economic and social development of the country. During 2020 and 2021, modern legal regulations have been adopted on the area of Science, Technology and Innovation, creating conditions so that Cuba can soon have a National Innovation Law. Likewise, the National Plan for Economic and Social Development until 2030 identifies these areas as a "Strategic Axis", which are conceptualized as a "driving force of national development".

The economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the Government of the United States of America for 60 years constitutes the main obstacle to the economic and social development of Cuba. Due to the US blockade hardening, in times of pandemic its measures have limited the access to food, medicine, energy, technology, and basic supplies.

Faced with this situation, we have been forced to develop our own solutions based on science, technology and innovation. Our scientists have designed everything, from grain harvesters and electric pumps for agricultural irrigation, to emergency lung ventilators.

Today we state, with healthy pride, the production of three vaccines and two vaccine candidates against COVID-19, with which 91% of the Cuban population is immunized, establishing a three-dose schedule. Furthermore, we have already vaccinated half the population with a fourth booster dose.

Cuba has tripled its national budget to finance Science, Technology and Innovation in the period 2000-2020, an amount approaching 1% of the Gross Domestic Product.

In May 2021, the National Innovation Council was established, headed by the President of the Republic of Cuba, Miguel Díaz Canel Bermúdez, as a strategic effort to prioritize this activity in our country.

However, the assignment of international financing for the development of the Cuban science, technology and innovation area is limited. We are working to enhance its impact, and results are achieved by the cooperation with international institutions such as FAO, the Green Climate Fund and the World Health Organization.

Currently, Cuba is implementing three projects by the International Fund for Agricultural Development financing system: PRODECOR, for the production of grains; PRODEGAN

for livestock development; and PRODECAFÉ, for coffee development. IFAD's support is crucial in our agricultural development efforts. I take this opportunity to reiterate that Cuba will honor its commitments to IFAD.

We thank IFAD for its cooperation with my country, which we can describe as efficient and timely. We wish to continue strengthening, and in this way, the working links and exchanges of experiences with developing countries.

Thanks.