

Statement by the representative of the Republic of the Niger

Mr Chair of the Governing Council,
Mr President of IFAD,
Honourable Governors,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to address you on behalf of the Republic of the Niger on the occasion of this 45th session of the Governing Council. I should like first of all to commend and encourage IFAD's efforts in support of poor rural people, both in my country and elsewhere in the world.

Niger is a vast landlocked Sahelian country with agropastoral potential that is subjected to severe climate change. At least 84 per cent of the country's population of 23 million live in rural areas, and more than half of them are under 15 years of age. The rural poverty rate is well above the rate in urban areas.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The theme of this 45th session of the Governing Council – Leveraging innovation and finance for a climate-resilient and inclusive recovery – is fully aligned with our current priorities and our vision to address the challenges I have mentioned.

Within a context of climate change and widespread rural poverty, and with far-flung production areas in extreme isolation, can we build sustainable development without first mobilizing all of the stakeholders and planning an exit strategy?

The answer is most decidedly no. And this is why our country, together with IFAD, has for a number of years engaged in a coherent, innovative and integrated approach to development consisting of economic development poles or hubs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Currently, IFAD's active portfolio is an estimated US\$450 million. Four projects are now under way with support from IFAD and its partners in Niger, focusing on the theme of family farming.

Allow me to express the gratitude of the Government and people of Niger for this important, ongoing and effective mobilization effort in support of farming and rural communities in my country.

IFAD's current engagement in Niger places our country among the largest portfolios on the continent.

In addition, I would like to note the recent appointment of Mr Éric Rwabidadi as Representative and Country Director in Niamey.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nevertheless, I would also like to take advantage of this opportunity to underscore the persistent and formidable challenges we still face in mobilizing water resources, coordinating the so-called Farmer House platforms, developing value chains and building resilience to climate change hazards and shocks.

To overcome these challenges, full implementation of the National Strategy on Small-scale Irrigation, the Investment Fund for Food and Nutritional Security and the Rural Land Tenure Policy is absolutely imperative.

Against this backdrop, we will assign special priority to these public policies in the next country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) – which we hope will trigger a deep-seated change in the rural environment over the next five years.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, let me again recognize our excellent partnership and convey, on behalf of the Government and people of Niger, our gratitude for all the efforts deployed by IFAD in Niger – and since 2021 in the G5 Sahel region – as we face an increasingly uncertain future.

Wishing you every success in our work. Thank you.