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RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

Why do your qualifications and experience make you a suitable candidate and what values would guide you as the President of IFAD? Describe also your management style, how you would work with your ideal senior management team and ensure a good work environment within the organization.

Qualifications Experience and Suitability:

Over my 30-year career, I have developed and demonstrated strong financial stewardship and strong advocacy capabilities in my engagements as a senior legal practitioner, seasoned diplomat, and Cabinet member with multiple dockets. In all my leadership roles, I have tackled a variety of pressing and interlinked dilemmas concerning good governance, state capability, inequality, human development, human rights, conflict resolution and peace building at national, regional, and global levels. I have cultivated the aptitude of ‘multidisciplinary’ thinking which I consider imperative for managing the manifold and dynamic challenges associated with orchestrating the delivery of global development goals at national level. I would bring to IFAD a deep and comprehensive understanding of the context in which governments in developing countries operate, their multifaceted obligations and the challenge of driving development under the constraint of limited resources.

Strong strategic management and rigorous financial oversight have been indispensable aspects of my work for many years in multiple ways. I have presided over critical government departments endowed with substantial budgets and wide international footprints, during periods characterized by serious regional security challenges and global threats such as terrorism, COVID-19 and climate change events. I have ensured the consistent strategic performance and financial compliance of complex public institutions in the face of variable national revenue flows and intermittent economic shocks. I have fostered a culture of organizational synergy, flexibility and efficiency within the context of a dynamic operating environment. Lastly, I have established a wide network of bilateral and multilateral partners and leveraged these partnerships in order to deliver impactful results.

Values and Management Style:

My experience as a senior legal practitioner and government leader have affirmed the importance of the following values: **service; professionalism; integrity; the duty of care and; continuous learning.** As President of IFAD, these values will guide me in the leadership of the senior management team and in the creation of a conducive work environment for the delivery of IFAD’s mandate. In my judgment, the efficacy of a top team is contingent on mutual respect and trust. Hence, leading by example, I will endeavour to retain open channels of communication with my senior management so as to ensure the clear articulation of expectations, standards of conduct and accountability with reference to the achievement of IFAD’s strategic objectives.

In collaboration with the senior management team, I expect to frame and lead IFAD’s policy and strategic direction, and to ensure that the organizational alignments, ownership and operational effectiveness required to translate plans and resources into tangible results, are implemented. Furthermore, I shall respect the professional acumen of senior management and purpose to make decisions based on professional advice, data and consultation particularly on issues pertaining to the Fund’s liquidity and sustainability. Finally, I shall purpose to a foster an organizational climate characterized by diligence, individual respect and fairness while always encouraging continuous education and innovation.

What are the lessons you have learnt related to strategic thinking and formulating development strategies and plans, and how will you use them to advance IFAD's mission?

Strategic plans and thinking are not ends in themselves. Although plans provide roadmaps for action, their utility is best measured in terms of their conversion into tangible results and real impact on lives. My experience has taught me that technically feasible courses of action in social and economic development and transformation are typically very large in number. Operationally feasible options that work in the real world are much smaller in number. Politically feasible options are even rarer. I believe the IFAD President must always keep these three types of feasibility in view, aiming to identify and mobilize support for that small set of truly transformative technically, operationally, and politically feasible courses of action. I have demonstrated that I know how to do that, with strong positive impacts at organizational level. A special challenge for IFAD is that results must be delivered in partnership with client governments. Therefore, the agency, competence and commitment of governments is essential.

As President of IFAD, I would prioritize institutional capacity building as well as strengthened relationships with governments and communities in the formulation and implementation of the development plans that frame the investment context facing IFAD. This is important because IFAD's programs and funding are channelled principally to LICs and MICs that often encounter state capacity challenges and economic constraints.

Within any organization, the choreography of strategy requires leadership at all levels. Strategic planning and thinking are not the reserve of top team managers but for the whole organization. Middle management must take ownership of strategic decisions and disseminate them. The *raison d'être* for strategic decisions must be regularly and fully communicated throughout the organization, aiming to ensure that the organization's culture, operating environment, and available resources are aligned and congruent with the strategy. In addition, the successful implementation of plans requires individual commitment and accountability. These truths will be important for IFAD as it seeks to continue the process of decentralizing its operations and decision making to bring IFAD's services closer to field. It is essential that synergies between country offices and headquarters are strong so that strategic direction does not dissipate. Therefore, the monitoring and evaluation of programs and processes for alignment, results and impact are critical.

What is your vision for IFAD? How would you strengthen its role and effectiveness as part of the international aid architecture, particularly in the context of COVID-19, economic shocks, climate change and biodiversity erosion? And in contributing to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, especially the elimination of hunger, malnutrition and poverty, including the most fragile contexts?

This is a moment of both crisis and transformation for the world as a whole, and for rural areas in particular. Many of the world's sharpest crises (especially those linked to violence and conflict) have large footprints in rural areas. Yet simultaneously, many of the most exciting developments and innovations (especially those linked to improved management of knowledge and information) are strongly grounded in rural areas. IFAD's rural people-driven mission, mandate, and approach could therefore not be more relevant or timely.

Under IFAD12, IFAD seeks to double its impact by more effectively and efficiently assembling and leveraging high-impact finance targeting the poor and marginalized in fragile rural areas, and sustainably safeguarding natural resources. This contribution to the international aid architecture is unique, rendering IFAD exceptionally well positioned to promote Global, regional, and national policies, partnerships and investments for inclusive, productive, resilient, and sustainable rural economies and food systems.

My vision for IFAD is fully in keeping with this unique and niche contribution. Under my leadership, IFAD would deepen and enhance its contributions and increase its effectiveness in the international aid architecture by seeking to:

- a) strengthen its advocacy in favour of rural poor through innovative and intensive stakeholder engagement with the object of reinforcing the nexus between advancement of rural agricultural development and the attainment of SDG 1 & 2;
- b) affirm its position as the "partner of choice" in the area of rural agricultural development by leveraging its policy leadership and disseminating its knowledge-assets at both global and national levels; improving the quality and proximity of its co-operation with client governments and communities; and curating collaborative and coherent interaction between other donors and agencies involved in food security;
- c) address emerging threats to the rural poor through innovative programs capable of building resilience and supporting vulnerable groups; and
- d) modify and diversify its resource base and sharpen its resource mobilization competencies.

IFAD's contributions ought to assist recipient countries precipitate verifiable and long term transformation of rural communities. This vision cannot be achieved by the President and organization alone. The support and guidance of IFAD's Executive Board and the Governing Council is also essential to IFAD's success. Therefore, as President I would be acutely mindful of the obligation of accountability and the respect for oversight.

As President, how would ensure IFAD's continued financial sustainability and mobilization of more resources (particularly to the poorest countries and in light of economic constraints) to allow IFAD to fulfil its mission and exert its comparative advantages? How could IFAD further strengthen its cooperation with low and middle-income countries?

Maintaining IFAD's financial sustainability is a fundamental duty. As President, I would first ascertain whether internal organizational savings can be attained by ensuring that internal funds are not wasted or applied to unviable processes and projects and that IFAD is 'right-sized' and 'fit for purpose' in respect of its structure, human resource base, financial controls mechanisms, and M&E systems. Second, I would endeavour to mobilize and assemble funds from other players in the international aid architecture as well as the private sector to compliment the core contributions made by members states, including the expanded options of market borrowing. Thirdly, I would explore co-financing opportunities with other lenders and assist recipient countries establish public – private partnerships to shore up their own contributions to rural development, Finally, I would where possible, encourage additional voluntary contributions from wealthier member states. In sum, the mobilisation of financial resources will need to become an important competency for IFAD.

To reinforce its cooperation with LICs and MICs, IFAD must invest in building up state competency and capability, and this includes bolstering institutional and human resources capacity. Competencies in policy formulation and implementation, debt management, land administration, technological innovation and R&D are imperative. Building efficiency in government systems and processes is crucial for reducing financial dependence, enhancing loan servicing and tackling the conundrum of rural poverty more efficiently. In this regard IFAD's contribution to strengthening food-systems for the rural poor, especially food production, income generation and markets access is imperative. Such support is extremely important for LICs especially those plagued by conflict, or in transition or undergoing post-conflict recovery. In this regard, intensified engagement by country and regional offices is essential. This is of great relevance to LICs in Africa where the bulk of IFAD's core resources are directed.

The needs of MICs often 'fall through the cracks' as they are not generally entitled to the preferential treatment accorded to LICs yet they still require support to achieve SDGs 1 and 2 within sections of their communities (particularly indigenous groups). A number of MICs are Small Island States (SIDs) which endure existential threats from severe and continuous climate shocks. Many of them are also saddled with high Debt-GDP ratios which impede their access to concessional financing. As President, I would endeavour to lead IFAD in devising new flexible strategies to assist these states access appropriate financing, including climate financing to enhance their rural agriculture adaptation measures.

Finally, IFAD's relationships with LICs and MICs must bear dividends terms in inclusive development and social justice. I am strongly supportive of IFAD's decision to integrate the plight of women, youth, the disabled and indigenous people into its cluster of programs and initiatives as overarching cross-cutting issues. As President I would continue this policy but would also focus attention on aging demographic in rural communities who sometimes form the bulk of poor small-scale rural farmers.