

46th session of the IFAD Governing Council

Statement on behalf of BENELUX

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This statement to the 46th session of the IFAD Governing Council is made on behalf of the Governments of the Kingdom of Belgium, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the Kingdom of the Netherlands. It underpins BENELUX's longstanding tradition of working together on substantive issues both within the EU and in the wider international context.

This year's theme of the Governing Council "Accelerating Action for Food Security" is of the greatest importance. Food crises are imminent and most apparent in regions experiencing a protracted crisis. Next to this, climate change, fragility and economic shocks are continuously breaking down food systems. IFAD's comparative advantage in reaching the most underserved and vulnerable makes the fund a key player in the area of food security and climate adaptation. The BENELUX therefore appreciates IFAD's commitment to keep its strong focus on low-income countries (LICs) and would like to commend IFAD for its important role in the most fragile countries during these times of 'polycrisis'.

The key priority of IFAD is building sustainable, inclusive and resilient local food systems and transforming rural livelihoods by doing so. The BENELUX supports the extra efforts that IFAD is taking to integrate climate adaptation and alignment with the Paris Agreement of IFAD. Small-scale farmers, including rural women, are among those who are suffering the most from the negative consequences of climate change. The interlinkages between agriculture, fragility, climate change and water are apparent and important to address.

The illegal war of aggression of Russia against Ukraine has disrupted global supply chains and increased global food and fertilizer prices – thereby exacerbating food insecurity especially in food import-dependent countries. The BENELUX welcomes Ukraine's application for non-original membership with IFAD. Ukraine has shown unity and made efforts to continue producing and exporting agricultural products essential to the maintenance of global food security despite the ongoing illegal war of aggression of Russia.

The BENELUX furthermore welcomes the fact that IFAD has continued the implementation of the decentralization process and the establishment of the Private Sector Financing Programme (PSFP). Mobilizing private sector resources will significantly increase investments in rural development and small-scale agriculture. With the increasing needs caused by the surging costs of food, fertilizer and fuel, these investments are highly needed.

An important year lies ahead of us with the replenishment negotiations for IFAD13. IFAD Member States and management will discuss topics such as balancing the mobilization of funds, the allocation of funds, the use of funds and potentially explore new innovations to mobilize financing in order to optimize delivery on its important mandate. The BENELUX supports IFAD's focus on fragility, climate and biodiversity finance, private sector engagement and gender, youth and social inclusion. Investing in development and growth can only be achieved by including women and girls. The BENELUX would therefore like to compliment IFAD for the attention that is given to gender equality and would like to request that during the upcoming replenishment, it remains on top of the agenda.

The BENELUX looks forward to an open, frank and constructive dialogue leading to a successful and ambitious replenishment of IFAD as a next step in our fruitful partnership.