

Statement by the representative of the Republic of El Salvador

Mr President of the Governing Council,
Mr President of IFAD,
Honourable Governors and distinguished delegates,

Allow me to convey, first of all, warm greetings on behalf of Nayib Bukele, President of the Republic, as well as in my own name. We wish you a fruitful session in a spirit of open dialogue and cooperation with one clear purpose in mind: the development of our rural people.

The food security and food sovereignty of our people is a priority for the Government of El Salvador. Accordingly, through the Agricultural Policy of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), we have ratified our commitment to this end for the Salvadorean people, and particularly for the most vulnerable.

El Salvador reaffirms its commitment to achieving the 2030 Agenda and related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. This is clearly demonstrated in the commitments set forth in the Agricultural Policy and the Agricultural Recovery Plan, pillar 1: Agricultural transformation for food security and food sovereignty.

We are convinced that consolidating inclusive and sustainable agrifood systems and promoting the agriculture sector – particularly small and medium-sized farming – are strategic for food security and food sovereignty. The same holds true for the sustainable development of developing countries, especially in the current context of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the international transport logistics crisis and the spike in prices for food and fertilizers to produce it.

Rural women and youth deserve special attention as they have historically been excluded and live with greater constraints on economic opportunities and access to employment and nutritious food. These constraints have been exacerbated by events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the effects of climate change on crops, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture.

We know that climate change affects crop and livestock production, fisheries and aquaculture, and that it has a direct impact on people's livelihoods and food security. Therefore, producing more and better food, with less of an impact on natural resources, is the key to our country's future.

Agricultural innovation and the use of technology by women and men farmers are essential to meet the growing demand for safe food of higher quality, to address the adverse effects of climate change and to contribute to eliminating poverty. In this sense it is important to modernize research and technology transfer systems that promote sustainable and inclusive production.

We are convinced that digital transformation of agriculture and quality data collection can help improve agrifood systems, foster innovation in production, reduce costs, facilitate access to markets and lead to the development of new business models. MAG has made strides in this regard, by digitalizing the roster of women and men producers receiving agricultural kits and other inputs for food production. In addition, it has created and implemented the Agroclimate and Marketing Information System (SIAM-MAG) application, a digital tool that provides information on prices for agricultural products in the country's major wholesale markets, as well as agroclimate alerts and a directory of producers that helps link production to markets.

Similarly, digital platforms are being used to train agricultural technicians and farmers, to generate new capacities and to strengthen and upgrade knowledge to facilitate the

transition from agrifood systems with low levels of efficiency and competitiveness to efficient and competitive agrifood systems that are adapted to climate change.

In the context of the current spike in global fertilizer prices, it is urgent to promote policies and practices to facilitate access by small and medium-sized farmers to fertilizers for food production, and to promote the production of and access to alternative fertilizers such as organic and bio inputs, making use of local knowledge on enriching soil.

The Rural Adelante Project, financed by an IFAD loan, an Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture (ASAP) grant and national counterpart funding, is promoting sustainable and inclusive value chains for dairy products, fruit and vegetables, honey, fish and aquaculture. Specialized technical and financial resources are being provided to women and men farmers organized into formal groups to strengthen their capacities in organization, production, value addition and commercialization. The aim is to foster modern, resilient agrifood systems and supply chains that are adapted to climate change. This has included supporting creation of the new law on family farming, and together we are working on the related regulations in order to bring this knowledge and successful experience to rural areas in El Salvador.

Rural Adelante also promotes the inclusion of women and youth in rural production, and their participation in the decision-making bodies of producer organizations. We have gone a step further with training in new masculinities to address the root problems and generate interventions that are truly transformational. We are convinced that the inclusion of women and youth brings sustainability to the initiatives supported by MAG and contributes to the country's food security and sovereignty.

Using the proceeds of a loan from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the programme for Strengthening the Climate Change Resilience of El Salvador's Coffee Forests is providing specialized technical assistance and incentives to small-scale coffee growers to maintain ecosystem services in coffee forests and contribute to family food security. This programme is additional to national action under the National Coffee Growing Recovery Programme.

The MAG authorities are undertaking bilateral cooperation with likeminded countries to promote the exchange of good practices and agricultural technologies, with a view to raising the productivity and competitiveness of national agrifood systems. The Government of Mexico and MAG recently signed a memorandum of understanding as part of cooperation under the Sembrando Vida [Sowing Life] Programme, which will facilitate the exchange of good practices and gene technology to improve Salvadorean livestock.

We are convinced that IFAD's technical and financial support for our national efforts to modernize and provide producers with production infrastructure – such as irrigation districts, supply centres, use of information technologies for agriculture and technical capacity-building and public policies on rural development – is contributing to achieving food security and food sovereignty, generating wealth in rural areas and thereby combating poverty.

We call upon IFAD, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and other United Nations agencies working on food security and sovereignty to continue to provide technical and financial support in various ways to ensure achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly SDG 2.

We are grateful for IFAD's financial and technical support to El Salvador, especially within the framework of Rural Adelante and its implementation in the eastern region of our country. More than 69,000 people have benefited by improving their resilience since the beginning of the pandemic, and more than 17,000 families and 90 organizations are working to counter the effects of climate change.

Finally, I would like to underscore that the good will of our Government and the talent, dedication and active participation of the beneficiaries, in addition to IFAD support, have made this one of the 10 best operations implemented globally. Building upon this experience, we take this opportunity to request the approval of a new operation whereby we can expand upon the positive results now being obtained with Rural Adelante to the remaining rural areas of El Salvador.