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INDIA AND GOVERNOR IN IFAD'S GOVERNING COUNCIL**

**THE 46TH GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING OF IFAD,
FEBRUARY 14-15, ROME ITALY**

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Governors, Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. With immense pleasure I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate **IFAD** for organising its **46th Governing Council Meeting**. I appreciate **IFAD's team** for its commitment towards bringing resilience in food systems and promoting sustainable development in this yet another challenging year.

2. Taking on with the G20 Presidency, our primary focus is on achieving an equitable growth for all in a sustainable, holistic, and inclusive manner as we steer through these challenging times under the theme of "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*" or "*One Earth. One family. One Future*". Keeping in view our futuristic, inclusive, and sustainable approaches, I hereby present the statement on the theme of "*Accelerating Action for Food Security*".

Global Context

3. Today, we meet at a time when the world is facing acute food shortages driven by conflict, climate change adversities, and rising poverty. **FAO** projected that **nearly 670 million will face hunger in 2030**.

4. Parallely, **global food prices sky-rocketed** due to high fertilizer prices, appreciation of US dollar and tighter monetary policies. Global foodgrain prices, especially maize and rice rose to 10% and 16%, respectively, in January 2023 (YoY) according to World Bank.

5. In addition, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimated that **climate change has reduced agricultural productivity growth by 21%** since 1961 which continues to threaten the livelihoods of millions. These facts put all nations in jeopardy as we are halfway through in accomplishing **SDG 2: Zero Hunger by 2030** and call for immediate action.

6. Hence, ensuring availability of food for all is utmost developmental challenge and we must not fail in times of fragile situations. Global partnerships and collaboration by multiple stakeholders in the global fora is the need of the hour to **transform food systems and ensure food sovereignty**.

India Context

7. India has set up a global example in the area of food security by becoming a **self-sufficient food-producing nation** and a **net exporter of farm produce to the world**. As we **transition from food security to nutritional security**, we continue to reform agriculture sector to increase overall production and resolve hunger.

8. On domestic front, during COVID-19 crisis, to maintain availability of food for poor, the **PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKAY)** was implemented to provide free foodgrains. The same has been extended for the year 2023 to make foodgrains available for **800 million** people.

9. Further, the recent Union Budget 2023 announced: (a) a scheme to promote alternative fertilisers for efficient foodgrain production, (b) **Atmanirbhar Horticulture Clean Plant**

Program to boost availability of disease-free planting material for high value horticultural crops, (c) setting up of **Agriculture Accelerator Fund** to support agri-start-ups by young entrepreneurs in rural areas to transform agri-practices and increase productivity.

10. In addition, India is also focusing on **cluster-based approaches through PPP, promoting digital public infrastructure for agriculture, and increasing agricultural credit** to enhance agri-productivity and expand food security.

11. As **2023 is International Year of Millets**, Prime Minister Narendra Modi encouraged **millets as a future food option** which has high nutritional values, resilient to climate change and consumption of which can resolve global food insecurity. To support millets production, **Union Budget 2023** focussed on making **India a global hub for millets** to share best practises, research and technologies to the world.

12. Furthermore, Prime Minister Modi is actively leading India's climate change response efforts through '**Lifestyle for Environment**' (or LiFE) initiative and calls for global community action towards preserving harmony between nature and food production.

13. Thus, with the ongoing G20 presidency we continue to promote **availability, affordability and accessibility of foodgrains at all times** in order to provide assistance to the vulnerable. Further, we call for universal cooperation to bring in multi-year investments in agri-infrastructure and affordable technology for building robust food systems.

IFAD's role

14. We greatly appreciate the role of IFAD in agriculture and rural development sectors with a proven track record in supporting sustainable, inclusive, nutritious and efficient food systems and supporting the smallholder farmers who are the most vulnerable across nations. **IFAD's collaboration with global key players in agricultural sector is thus critical** to create an impact at field level and facilitate financial resources to strengthen global food systems. In this regard, we suggest that IFAD must reinforce its efforts in the following key areas to ramp up the impact.

Climate-smart farming

15. Climate-smart agricultural (CSA) practises as a strategy have the potential to augment agri-food systems to be more environment-friendly and remunerative for small-scale farmers. In this regard, IFAD could play a catalytic role in applying CSA interventions in projects to make small-scale farmers adaptive towards climate change and induce large-scale food production.

Unlock the potential of MSMEs

16. Since, IFAD has a comparative advantage in supporting Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) at global scale, IFAD can further facilitate MSMEs to unlock innovative financial mechanisms towards strengthening agriculture activities and food security.

Private sector engagement

17. Private sector can bring in sizable investments through leveraging its technical expertise and tech-driven innovative solutions to meet current global challenges. IFAD can thus accelerate operations, explore new private partnerships and fastrack existing private sector engagement to bring in measurable value addition.

Promoting millets production

18. To cater the needs of food security, we encourage IFAD to identify, mobilise resources and implement tools to promote millets. India being the largest producer of millets, can share its best practises to strengthen and scale-up millets' adoption at large-scale.

Natural farming and agroecological approaches

19. On addressing climate effects, there is need for pioneering leadership in the area of agroecology to attain sustainable livelihoods for smallholder farmers. IFAD can contribute and support existing agroecology practises by collaborating with governments, bilateral and multilateral agencies to unlock financial resources and develop knowledge products.

Data and technology

20. Moving on, digital technologies may lead to innovative tools such as geospatial technologies for crops and AI-driven data to make significant impact across food chains. Thus, IFAD can boost its investments on ICT platforms, facilitate collaboration and co-finance projects on promoting investments in AI and drone technologies.

Global partnerships and collaboration

21. IFAD has been cooperating with global initiatives such as **Global Alliance for Food Security, Global Crisis Response Group on food, energy and finance, Food and Agriculture Resilience Mission Initiative** etc. to have a quantifiable impact on food chains. It can further contribute through creating global knowledge platforms and cooperating with international agencies.

Conclusion

22. Much has been done, but not sufficient to arrest the trend of recurrent food crisis. The need of the hour is to work in-tandem with multiple-stakeholders including public sector, private sector, bilateral and multilateral agencies by mobilising resources, harnessing knowledge and past experiences to double the impact on food systems transformation. The road ahead lies with bringing in huge investments in providing food safety nets for the poor; new ways of farming and diversified livelihoods.

23. While there is a long way to go, India continues to share its expertise and best practises on global fora. Finally, let me assure our cooperation and support and we look forward to working with IFAD on the areas of food security and agriculture.

I wish you all a successful and stimulating Governing Council session. Thank You.

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