

Country statement of the Ministry of Agriculture, State of Eritrea to be delivered on the 47th Governing Council of IFAD 14 – 15 February, 2024 in Rome

Allow me first to express my utmost gratitude for the warm hospitality that has been accorded to me and my delegation by IFAD to participate and contribute to the success of the 47th IFAD Governing Council Meeting. Let me also applaud the Organizing Committee for the initiative and hard work it has taken to organize this important Conference at a decisive point in time.

For a broad spectrum of synergy and cooperation, allow me to highlight the state of Agriculture and food in Eritrea.

Eritrea- the land of indomitable spirit people, with 85-90% smallholder farming population situated in the horn of Africa. It has a lasting partnership in the Rural Agricultural Development with the pro-poor financing partnership with IFAD. The exemplary partnership between Eritrea and IFAD has started right after the country`s independence in 1994. Since then, several Agricultural Development that focus on Soil and Water Conservation, Integrated Crop and Livestock Development, Natural Resources Management and Fisheries Development projects have been satisfactorily implemented and contributed to the priority goal of attaining safe food and nutrition security in the country.

IFAD support which initially targeted one region on irrigation development, continued with two other regions on rural recovery and development and became national in scope with implementation of National and Integrated Agricultural Development Project. Eritrea, with the resources extended so far, has achieved commendable and evident results in areas pertinent to the above stated sub-sectors not forgetting its contributions towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030.

Cognizant of the Global commitments of achieving sustainable goals in six years` time, and the impact of global challenges like climate change, impact of Covid-19 pandemic and Russia-Ukraine conflict on Agricultural Development, Eritrea is launching its third Agricultural Strategic Plan 2024-2028, with a theme of achieving SAFE and NUTRITIOUS FOOD FOR EVERYONE EVERYWHERE BY 2028 which exactly resonates with the theme of the IFAD conference `INNOVATION FOR FOOD SECURE FUTURE`. However, as Eritrea is part of the sub-Saharan peninsula, characterized by frequent drought and erratic/unpredictable rains, the mitigation strategy and practice is obviously complex and calls for concerted efforts of key development partners and stakeholders such as IFAD.

The Eritrea-IFAD partnership and the projects implemented since 1994 until now has evolved to meet the domestic demands and needs as well as have responded to the requirements set in the Global Sustainable Development Goals. The results/impacts of the development interventions so far, have evidently and significantly contributed to the improvement in the wellbeing of the targeted communities that include Women House Holds (HHs) and Youth affected by natural and man-made disasters. Hence, for wider and more inclusive and sustainable impact on Agricultural Development and transformation, timely collaboration and support of IFAD is very much appreciated and is highly needed in the Eritrean context.

Currently, Eritrea is having IFAD supported projects under the Ministries of Agriculture and Ministry of Marine Resources that are greatly contributing to the safe food and nutrition security initiatives of the Government. The total outreach so far has 23,945 HHs all over the country. This is based on the development objectives that sustainably ensure agricultural production and productivity not only of the primary targets but also the affiliated communities that are expected to benefit through service provision to the primary targets.

Thanks to the Crisis Response Initiative (CRI fund), Eritrea, as a victim of the climate change and environmental degradation and drought, has greatly benefited and shifted to production and distribution of organic fertilizer (liquid and solid), organic pesticide and improved seed. Impacts and lessons learned from the CRI initiative calls for more collaborative efforts to design and implement mitigation measures. As usual, we want to assure you that, The Government of the State Eritrea is effectively mobilizing communities in afforestation, Soil and Water Conservation (SWC) and related activities. Hence, similar initiative must be brought to the attention of Global institutions like IFAD that have common interest to work on the agenda.

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As evidenced by the 17% increase in its contribution, as usual, Eritrea is and will always be keen to work with IFAD towards achieving the global, national goals and objectives to achieve Safe and Nutritious Food to Everyone Everywhere. Moreover, Eritrea is also committed to combat desertification, loss of natural resources and soil degradation, etc that have direct negative impacts on agricultural and marine resource and hence to the improvement of the resilience of livelihoods of the communities whose wellbeing is dependent on these resources.