

# Closing Remarks at IFAD Innovation Talk no. 7 on “Countdown to the SDGs: Employing Results, Evidence and Targeted Investments”.

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**As Prepared for Delivery**

*Estimated delivery time: 7 minutes*

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear colleagues,

The Sustainable Development Goals have provided a framework for UN Agencies and all partners and stakeholders to move towards common objectives

Even prior to the onset of the pandemic, the world was off track to achieve the SDGs

Now, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, an unprecedented health, economic and social crisis are threatening lives and livelihoods, making the achievement of SDG indicators and targets even more challenging

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in 2021 (SOFI) estimated that between 720 and 811 million people in the world faced hunger in 2020 – as many as 161 million more than in 2019.

Nearly 2.37 billion people did not have access to adequate food in 2020 – an increase of 320 million people in just one year. No region of the world has been spared

More than ever it is critical to monitor our progress, report for accountability and transparency but also to ensure that we adjust our approach on a timely manner

FAO is custodian of 21 SDG indicators and contributing agency for 5 indicators

As the custodian agency:

- The Organization is leading the development of new statistical methodologies and coordinate the dissemination of the relevant documentation
- Overseeing the data collection from national statistical agencies, its aggregation and dissemination at regional and global levels
- Promoting the adoption of internationally agreed statistical methods/standards and coordinate statistical capacity development initiatives in support of SDG monitoring
- Coordinate inputs for the preparation of annual global and regional progress reports

As we heard from most of the speakers, the measurement of SDG indicators is key:

- it will support evidence-based decision making for sustainable investments and the transformation of agri-food systems
- It will help assess the impact of our interventions
- Raise awareness on the challenges faced in agri-food systems (e.g. through the State of the World collection)
- Monitor progress in the implementation of global and regional initiatives
- Mobilize all stakeholders on the achievement of the SDGs

As we heard from Ruggero, the role of Private Sector is vital for implementation of the 2030 agenda

We would need to create an enabling environment and an enabling policy for private sector's active engagement and investment in agri-food systems

New SDG indicator framework for the private sector is a good step forward

It improves accountability frameworks and facilitate implementation of SDG target 12.6 (Encourage companies to improve their sustainability reporting)

I would like to also emphasize on UNDP's point regarding reporting on both impact and performance to maximize our contribution to the SDGs

It is definitely not an easy task but a lot of efforts have been made and bringing them all together will allow us to reach this milestone

I do believe that there are plenty of opportunities to accelerate achieving the SDGs in the next 9 years to come

Through the Hand in Hand Initiative FAO has created a Data Lab adapting to the ongoing paradigmatic technological change on one side and the crisis of the traditional data collection systems on the other side

The HiH Initiative is characterised by data-intensive tasks like identifying bottlenecks and investment gaps, and developing a detailed monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the impact of its action by 2030

The primary objective of the Data Lab is to address the specific challenges related to timeliness, granularity, data gaps and automation of analysis for quicker insights

The HiH will also foster investment including from the private sector in the more vulnerable countries

Innovation and digitalization are key accelerators towards achieving the SDGs, but for any initiative to succeed, country-ownership and partnerships are key

FAO is ready to work closely with you all towards this ambitious agenda.

Thank you!