

**Inaugural Statement by the Hon. Prime Minister of Uganda
IFAD Country Programme Evaluation of Uganda
National Roundtable Workshop, Kampala, 12 July 2012**

Hon Ministers,

Distinguished Members of the IFAD Delegation,

Distinguished Representations of the Multilateral and Bilateral Organisations,

Government Officials, and

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to welcome you all warmly to the Uganda Country Programme Evaluation National Roundtable Workshop, co-organised by the Government of Uganda and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. It gives me much pleasure to note the participation of representatives from different institutions from the Government, private sector, multilateral and bilateral development organisations, NGOs, research and academic institutions, and others at this learning workshop, which all have an important role to play in the sustainable development of the agriculture and rural sectors in Uganda. I am sure your presence and personal experiences will enrich the discussions and exchanges today.

As you know, small agriculture is extremely important for the growth and development of the Ugandan economy as well as the overall well-being of its people. Although agriculture accounts for around 15 per cent of the country total gross domestic product, it continues to be fundamental in terms of engaging about 70 per cent of the total labour force, delivering about 48 per

cent of exports, and providing a large proportion of the raw materials for industry.

As many of you know, the most important agricultural sub-sector is food crops followed by forestry and fisheries. Plantains, cassava, sweet potatoes, and maize are among the main food crops. The main cash crops include coffee, sugar, tobacco, tea, oil seed crops and cotton. Non-traditional export crops have emerged, for example, cut flowers and vanilla, and fish has become an important export item. Food crops and livestock products are increasingly being exported informally to neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. Cash and food crops are largely grown by smallholders under rain-fed conditions. The area under irrigation is still small, but many areas of Uganda have good rainfall compared to other parts of Eastern Africa. In spite of that, developing irrigation infrastructure and capacities, including small irrigation systems, is a priority for the country to ensure improved production and productivity.

IFAD has been an important partner for Uganda for more than 30 years. The Fund has financed 14 loan-financed operations for a total project costs of around USD 1.4 billion, which includes nearly USD 300 million in IFAD loans on highly concessional terms, USD 600 million as Government's own counterpart funding, USD 200 million from the private sector, as well as around USD 300 million in co-financing from other donors.

IFAD-assisted projects and programmes have focused on introducing better agriculture technology and extension, agro-processing and value addition, development of rural infrastructure, building rural financial services, community development, women's empowerment, and other related areas. One key distinguishing accomplishment of the co-operation is the promotion of

public-private sector partnerships in the palm oil sub-sector, which can be considered innovative and far-reaching. The Vegetable Oil Development Project funded by IFAD, is in fact, the first such partnership of a large magnitude in the agriculture sector in Uganda. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to express the Government of Uganda's deep appreciation to IFAD for its support and collaboration, especially as we consider the Fund an important partner in our fight against rural poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

I would also like to underline that the Government welcomes the first country programme evaluation of Uganda undertaken by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD in Uganda. The country programme evaluation was well organised and we endorse its main findings and recommendations. In addition, the evaluation gave us a unique opportunity for collective reflection on the performance of the IFAD-Government of Uganda partnership in the past, and to identify lessons learned, opportunities and challenges that we need to carefully consider in the future, as we move forward together with the IFAD management in developing the new Uganda results-based country strategic opportunities programme - including identifying future geographic and sub-sector priorities as well as the institutional development requirements at both the national and local levels to achieve enhanced results on the ground.

The country programme evaluation has recommended for IFAD and Government to expand geographic coverage of IFAD operations to the northern region in the future. After restoration of security, given IFAD's mandate and considering that northern Uganda is the region having the most significant development challenges and by far the highest rural poverty incidence, there now seems to be ample justification for IFAD to scope for a more focused and intensive support intervention in the north of the country. I believe this avenue should therefore be explored seriously in future IFAD-supported operations.

Building also on the successful experience of the Vegetable Oil Development Project including the innovative public-private partnership in that context, the other key recommendation of the country programme evaluation is for IFAD and Government to promote value chain development in specific sub-sectors in Uganda. This is indeed critical, and efforts will need to be invested in exploring additional and alternative forms of public-private sector partnerships at different stages in the value chain, including with small and medium enterprises, commercial banks, as well as with larger private sector entities. Some areas that could be explored for value chain development in Uganda include the dairy sub-sector and cassava animal feed industry, which could contribute to meeting the growing demand in urban areas for milk and other livestock products.

As also noted by the evaluation, Government encourages IFAD to pay serious attention to out-posting the Uganda country programme manager from Rome to Kampala. From our side, the Government will provide all the necessary support and assistance required to ensure the country programme manager can be based in Kampala in the near future. I believe this would reinforce further the collaboration and between IFAD and Uganda, through even better communication, dialogue and partnerships with the ultimate aim of achieving better developmental results.

In closing, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to thank you all for being here and wish you a successful workshop. I look forward to being briefed by my colleagues on the outcomes of the discussions at the end of the day. To the IFAD delegation from Rome, I hope you are enjoying your stay in Uganda, and time permitting, I encourage you to take some time off, if possible, to see some of the natural beauties of our country.