

**STATEMENT OF MR Oscar A. Garcia,  
DIRECTOR OF THE INDEPENDENT OFFICE OF  
EVALUATION OF IFAD**

- 1. Honourable Mr Nelson Barbosa, Minister for  
Planning, Budget and Management**
- 2. Honourable Mr Patrus Ananias de Sousa, Minister of  
Agrarian Development**
- 3. Mr Claudio Castelo Branco Puty, Secretary of  
International Affairs in the Ministry of Planning,  
Budget and Management**
- 4. Authorities and Officials of the Government of Brazil  
and other Development Agencies; IFAD Colleagues**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am truly honoured and pleased to participate in this Round-Table Workshop, at the conclusion of the independent evaluation of the IFAD-supported Country Programme in Brazil. As some of you may know, Brazil is particularly close to my heart, as I lived in this beautiful country. I keep fond memories of that time, such as my participation in the “Diretas Ja” Movement, in Praça da Sé in São Paulo, which led to the country direct elections for the presidency. I am aware how important is living in a democracy, and I am deeply impressed by the changes introduced in the last 20 years by democratic

governments to improve the well-being of Brazilians, and reduce poverty, especially rural poverty.

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Government of Brazil, in particular the Ministry for Planning, Budget and Management for their invaluable support and collaboration throughout this country programme evaluation process and for co-organizing today's workshop. I thank the authorities of the State of Ceará Government for their warm hospitality and constructive engagement during the field visit of the IFAD delegation to the Dom Hélder Câmara Project.

A word of appreciation is also due to Mr Vimlendra Sharan, representative of India to IFAD's Executive Board and Evaluation Committee Chairperson; Mr Wierish Ramsoekh, representative of The Netherlands to the Executive Board; the IFAD's Associate Vice President for Corporate Services Department, Ms Lakshmi Menon, who honour us with her presence; and Mr Joaquin Lozano, Director of IFAD's Latin America and the Caribbean Division. All of them are here today, as is the IFAD Brazil Country Team.

I would like to thank Mr Ashwani Muthoo, Deputy Director of the Independent Office of Evaluation, who led the evaluation, Mr Steven Oliver, senior consultant who ably conducted this comprehensive work and Igor Carneiro and Marcio Porto, the national consultants who worked hard to bring the evaluative evidence presented before you today.

Allow me to share with you a brief background on my office. The Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD is an integral division in the organizational architecture of the Fund. Structurally, our independence is primarily derived from the fact that we report directly to the Executive Board of IFAD. Behaviourally, independent evaluations avoid conflict of interest and undue pressure, by not having been directly responsible for the policy-setting, design, or overall management of the subject of evaluation.

The mandate of our office is to undertake impartial and evidence-based evaluations of projects, country programmes and corporate policies, with the aim of assessing results achieved, and generating lessons to further strengthen the performance of IFAD-financed operations on the ground.

The purpose of the Brazil country programme evaluation has been to provide an impartial and rigorous assessment of performance that can help the Government, IFAD and other partners to develop the next country strategy - COSOP - and new projects financed by IFAD.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, we will be discussing the findings, conclusions and recommendations of this Country Programme Evaluation, which

will provide valuable inputs for the preparation of the evaluation's Agreement at Completion Point. For those of you who are not familiar with this, the Agreement at Completion Point is a short document summarizing the main recommendations, which the Government of Brazil and IFAD Management will agree to adopt and implement within a certain timeframe.

The evaluation has been conducted in a context of continuous growth and evolution in the country, and supported by strong Government commitment.

Alongside the rapid economic growth, Brazil has made important strides in several key social indices. The Human Development Index value of Brazil increased continually from 1990 to 2013, placing it in the high human development category.

The changes in the conditions of poverty and inequality in Brazil cannot be understood solely as a result of economic growth, but also of an important expansion in the scope of social policies and public expenditures in this area.

In terms of meeting the targets to achieve Millennium Development Goal number 1 – eradicate extreme poverty and hunger – Brazil has already surpassed the target. However, in spite of its accelerated growth and poverty reduction efforts, there are still challenges related to rural poverty reduction and income inequality.

I will highlight only a few findings from the evaluation, since my colleague Ashwani Muthoo will give you a more comprehensive presentation shortly.

The evaluation finds that Brazil and IFAD have developed a solid and strategic partnership over more than 35 years. IFAD financed six new loan-funded projects following the adoption of the 2008 COSOP. The total cost of the projects is US\$452.9 million, of which IFAD provided US\$141.2 million. Additional financing of US\$23 million is to be provided from the Spanish Trust Fund, making it the largest portfolio of IFAD-supported operations in the Latin America and the Caribbean region.

There have been decisive improvements in the performance of the Brazil-IFAD cooperation in several areas, but there is need for consolidation to ensure greater effectiveness. For instance, projects have shown good development results in terms of water management. Beneficiaries have increased their food consumption, their incomes have increased from non-farm activities, and they have become empowered to influence resource allocation. Also, gender mainstreaming, involvement of the rural youth, and innovation and scaling-up have all improved. A focus on the north-east region has been appropriate and targeting has reached women and rural youth.

There are still some areas that deserve further attention. Firstly, the performance in non-lending activities, such as policy dialogue, partnership-building and knowledge

management, has taken some steps in the right direction, but much more will be needed if these non-lending activities are to better support institutional and policy transformation.

Secondly, investment projects have paid attention to both agricultural and non-agricultural activities, though with less attention to agriculture, especially food production and productivity, which is at the core of IFAD's mandate. These are areas that will require greater attention in order to further support the development of commercial agriculture and off-farm employment – two critical means for beneficiaries to make the shift towards better and sustainable incomes and well-being.

Thirdly, although there was good evolution in IFAD's operating model, further adjustments would bring added value, for example by strengthening the synergy between the lending portfolio activities and the grant-financed SSC initiatives.

And last but not least, monitoring and evaluation and results measurement have shown some weaknesses across the portfolio. In general, monitoring and evaluation activities have not received the resources and attention they need and deserve, given that they are at the foundation of the objectives of enhancing knowledge-sharing, learning and policy dialogue.

I invite you to absorb the inputs provided by this independent evaluation and engage frankly and constructively in a dialogue to explore ways to enhance the collaboration between IFAD and the Government of Brazil for rural poverty reduction.

Let me conclude with a quote from the famous Brazilian author Euclides da Cunha, who in 1902 wrote:

*“Aqueles homens que chegavam dilacerados pelas garras do jagunço e pelos espinhos da terra, eram o vigor de um povo posto à prova do ferro, à prova do fogo e à prova da fome”*

Let us get inspired by the strength of those men and women of the Sertao. Let us find ways to make the IFAD partnership with the Government of Brazil even stronger, so we can walk together the path for an inclusive and sustainable transformation of the rural sector.

I thank you for your attention.