

Brasilia, Thursday 22 October 2015

9h55 – 10h05 a.m.

Honourable Patrus Ananías, Minister of Agrarian Development;

Mr Claudio Puty, Secretary of International Affairs, Ministry of Planning,
Budget and Management;

Mr Umberto Oliveira, Secretary of Territorial Development, Ministry of
Agrarian Development;

Members of IFAD Executive Board from India and the Netherlands;

Distinguished representatives of IFAD partners in the Federal and State
Governments of Brazil, civil society, UN and other international partners in
Brazil; and

Ladies and gentlemen;

I am pleased to welcome you all to the national roundtable workshop on the
Brazil country programme evaluation (CPE), done by the Independent Office of
Evaluation of IFAD. It is indeed a pleasure to have you all among us today,
from different institutions and different parts of Brazil. I thank you immensely
for the efforts you have kindly made to being here, and to contribute your
insights and experience to the dialogue on the IFAD-Brazil partnership. It is my
first visit to Brazil and I am extremely delighted to being here with you,
representing IFAD's senior management.

IFAD has worked in Brazil for over 30 years. The partnership between IFAD and
Brazil is extremely important for us, for at least two main reasons. Firstly, Brazil
is a large country with more than 200 million people, out of which around 30
million people live in rural areas. They mostly derive their livelihood from
family farming activities. Supporting such family farmers is consistent with
IFAD's core mandate of improving the food security and livelihoods among
smallholder farmers and other disadvantaged groups such as women, rural
youth, indigenous peoples and the *quilombolas* communities in Brazil.

Secondly, the Brazil-IFAD partnership is of strategic importance because Brazil represents IFAD's largest country programme in the Latin America and the Caribbean. It will continue to remain so in the future.

Historically, since IFAD started its operations in 1978, it has provided financing for 11 projects and programmes for a total project cost of around US\$ 830 million in Brazil. Currently, six projects are ongoing in the semi-arid regions of north-east of the country. It is important to note that the Brazilian Government has provided a significant amount of counterpart funds to IFAD operations, which is highly valued and is a clear indication of the ownership and commitment of the Government to rural poverty reduction.

In June 2011, IFAD established a country office in the city of Salvador, Bahia. I had the pleasure to visit the UN house in Salvador yesterday. The main aim of the country office is to support IFAD-financed operations in the northeast, and to supervise and monitor implementation progress. The Salvador country office is staffed by two country programme officers and one country programme assistant, all Brazilian nationals who are among us here today, and I would like to thank them for their efforts, passion and professionalism. Moreover, I would like to reassure the Government and other partners that IFAD's country presence is an important element of the Fund's operating model and decentralisation strategy. We are fully committed to support the country programme in an effective and efficient manner.

Moving onto the Brazil CPE. First of all, I would like to express appreciation IOE for their efforts and for an excellent evaluation. We take note of the Brazil CPE findings and recommendations, as we move forward together with the Government in preparing the next Brazil country strategy in the coming months.

I would now like to take this opportunity to share my thoughts on some specific issues raised by the country programme evaluation.

Firstly, Brazil has a range of public policies and programmes aimed at the development of family farmers, which have traditionally been at the centre of promoting food security and eliminating hunger and malnutrition. For example, these policies and programmes provide family farmers with access to rural credit, technical assistance and value addition of produce that is

important for improved household incomes and assets. As such, it is appropriate that IFAD programmes are properly anchored in such public policies and programmes, to ensure sustainability of benefits and scaling up for wider impact on rural poverty.

Secondly, I agree it is important that IFAD investments include attention to agricultural activities, as a basis for rural transformation. At the same time, I would like to emphasise that IFAD investments need also to continue providing wider rural support services and inputs to beneficiaries – such as the development of community infrastructure - so they can engage effectively in productive activities that can lead to better rural livelihoods.

Thirdly, it is well known that Brazil is one of the largest exporter of agricultural produce in the world. This is indeed commendable and a reflection of the country's commitment to agriculture in general. At the same time, however, efforts needs to be continued to support family farmers, who produce around 70 per cent of all food consumed in the country. They need access to climate-smart agriculture technology including sustainable water management in the semi-arid regions, so they may further improve their productivity. This would needs to be combined with better opportunities for agro-processing and greater and direct access to markets.

There are two further issue that I would like to raise. The first relates to monitoring and evaluation. It is critical that – with Government support – IFAD-funded projects and programmes have well-functioning monitoring and evaluation systems. Such systems are important both for monitoring implementation progress, but also to generate lessons that can help project management to make necessary mid-course adjustments. In this regard, it is essential that baselines surveys are done in a timely manner, and that logical frameworks are clear and have measurable indicators. I encourage the Government to devote the required attention to monitoring and evaluation, and reassure you of IFAD's commitment to ensure all projects have effective and efficient systems.

Secondly, taking into account the country's priorities, IFAD is also committed to ensuring that its project experience can be used as a basis for south-south and triangular cooperation. Similarly, we will continue and even further

strengthen our efforts to document good practice and lessons from IFAD operations in Brazil that can be shared across projects and states, but also made available to other countries in the region and beyond.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the past few days, I had the opportunity to visit some land reform settlements and rural communities assisted by the Dom Helder Camara Project in Rio Grande do Norte. I also had the privilege of meeting Mr Camilo Santana, Governor of the State of Ceará, and witness his clear commitment to rural poverty reduction and his appreciation of IFAD support. While a few days' visit can only provide a flavour of the problems being tackled and the work being carried out both by the communities and the local authorities, I returned with a clear sense of commitment and appreciation for the progress being made in the very challenging environment of the semi-arid north-east.

In closing, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to inform you that the Executive Board of IFAD has decided to select Brazil for its 2016 annual country visit, and the IFAD President is also planning a visit in the early part of next year. These are further reflections of the importance IFAD devotes to its partnership with Brazil. From my side, I share with you the immense satisfaction I have derived from my first visit to Brazil, and look forward to returning to this marvellous country in the near future. I wish you all a very fruitful and constructive dialogue and look forward to hearing your valuable views on the CPE and the priorities for the future IFAD-Brazil partnership. Thank you.