

ETHIOPIA CPE NATIONAL ROUND-TABLE WORKSHOP
5 November 2015

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

**1. Honourable Ms Firenesh Mekuria, State Minister for
Agriculture and Natural Resources**

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 Ethiopia.

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Government of Ethiopia, in particular the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources for their invaluable support and collaboration throughout this country programme evaluation process and for co-organizing today's workshop. I thank the authorities in the regions of Amhara and Afar for their warm hospitality and constructive engagement during the field visit of the IFAD delegation to the Participatory Small-scale Irrigation Development Programme and the Pastoral Community Development Project.

A word of appreciation is also due to Mr Sana Jatta, Director of IFAD's East and Southern Africa Division; Mr Han Ulaç Demirag, the recently appointed Ethiopia Country Programme Manager; Mr Robson Mutandi, former Country Director for Ethiopia, who is now IFAD Representative and Country Director in Mozambique. All of them are here today, as is the IFAD Ethiopia Country Team.

I would like to thank Mr Pradeep Itty, Lead Evaluator of the Independent Office of Evaluation, who was responsible for this evaluation and Mr. Inder Sud, senior consultant who ably contributed to this comprehensive work. The evaluation team members were Mr Hussein Bekele, Ms. Honey Hassen Mohammed, Ms. Valeria Rosa Cerza, Mr. Marc de Sousa-Shields, Mr. Bejital Berhanu and Mr. Hussien Aman. I welcome the Team as most members are here 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. 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 under 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 Ethiopia 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 evaluation recommendations, which the Government of Ethiopia and IFAD Management will agree to adopt and implement within a certain timeframe.

The country has experienced continuous growth and evolution, supported by strong Government commitment. As we all know, Ethiopia has made progress in several key social indices: since

2004, the country has enjoyed real GDP growth averaging 10.7 per cent per year, compared to the sub-Saharan average performance of 5.3 per cent. The World Bank Global Economic Prospects expects growth to average a 10 per cent in 2014/15, and to remain at 9 per cent level in the next years.

To complement the data on GDP, the poverty headcount ratio in the country has decreased substantially in the past 20 years, from 45.5 per cent to 29.6 per cent of the total population.

Significant progress was also made by Ethiopia in meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): Ethiopia is on track to meet most MDGs.

Despite having experienced such impressive strides over more than a decade, Ethiopia is still facing significant development challenges.

African countries have an opportunity to anchor agriculture more firmly in the national agenda. The commitment under the 2003 Maputo Declaration to increase public spending on agriculture to a modest 10 per cent of their national budgets and raise agricultural productivity by at least 6 per cent is yet to be met.

Ethiopia is exemplary as it is the only African country to have met this target, as it spent 11.7 per cent of its budget on agriculture during the period 2003 to 2013 and recorded productivity GDP growth rates in agriculture above 6 per cent per annum.

This highlights how important the work of the Government and its development partners, in particular IFAD, still is.

Ethiopia and IFAD have developed a strong and effective partnership for poverty alleviation over more than 35 years. Since 1980, IFAD has invested US\$473 million in Ethiopia in the form of loans and grants in 17 programmes and projects, with an overall cost of US\$1.2 billion. Ethiopia is currently IFAD's largest programme in Africa and was among the first countries to have an IFAD country office in the context of the Field Presence Pilot Programme, in 2005.

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

The evaluation finds that in most dimensions, IFAD's Ethiopia portfolio performs higher than the average for East and Southern Africa. In fact, the portfolio performance is rated as satisfactory, with all the evaluation criteria assessed as "moderately satisfactory" or better. Among the strongest features of the portfolio were the emphasis given to human and social capital, and project designs that were fully aligned with the Government's decentralization thrust. Sustainability, scaling up and gender were also areas that yielded satisfactory results.

Notwithstanding the strengths, there are still some areas that deserve further attention.

Firstly, the evaluation finds that IFAD should use its resources to focus on those areas where it has a comparative advantage and where it has already established, or has the potential to establish, a leadership position. Support to small-scale irrigation, rural finance and pastoral communities should be the areas for such support, allowing IFAD to build on experiences, deepen its involvement, enhance the quality of its interventions, and use them to pursue a more in-depth institutional and policy development agenda.

Secondly, monitoring and evaluation was also weak at project level and did not enable reporting on outcomes, de facto inhibiting effective feedback and learning.

Thirdly, among the areas that could be improved, is the country programme's impact on institutions and policies. According to the evaluation findings, IFAD did not fully take advantage of its strong programme and well-regarded field presence to have a commensurate dialogue on sector policies based on its experience on the ground.

Last, but not least, looking at IFAD's future involvement in the country, the evaluation recommends developing project interventions adopting a longer-term programmatic approach, following the very successful model of a succession of phases in the pastoral programme. This would mean supporting a

theme with a series of projects over a 15- to 20-year time period, allowing IFAD to become a real catalyst for development effectiveness in Ethiopia.

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 Ethiopia for preserving agriculture as a major source for economic growth and rural poverty reduction.

Let us find together ways to make the IFAD partnership with the Government of Ethiopia even stronger for enhanced development effectiveness.

I thank you for your attention.