

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

- 1. Honourable Dr. Nihat Pakdil, Deputy Undersecretary.  
Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock**
- 2. Dr. Metin Turker, Acting General Director of  
Agrarian Reform. Ministry of Food, Agriculture and  
Livestock**
- 3. Dr Taylan Kiymaz, Head of Department of  
Agriculture. Ministry of Development**
- 4. Ilker Manyaz, Director of Working Group of  
Externally Financed Projects. Ministry of Food,  
Agriculture and Livestock**

**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 Country Programme in Turkey.

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Government of Turkey, in particular the Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Livestock, for their invaluable support and collaboration throughout this Country Programme Evaluation process and for co-organizing today's workshop. I would like to extend this appreciation to the Ministry of Development, Ministry of Forest and Water Affairs, and to the Undersecretary of Treasury.

A word of appreciation is also due to IFAD's Associate Vice President for Corporate Services Department, Ms Lakshmi Menon, who honours us with her presence, Ms Khalida Bouzar, Director of the Near East, North Africa and Europe Division; and Mr Abdelhamid Abdouli, Turkey Country Programme Manager.

I would like to thank Mr Miguel Torralba, Senior Evaluation Officer of the Independent Office of Evaluation, who led the evaluation and Mr Tariq Husain, senior consultant who ably conducted this comprehensive endeavour and 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 Turkey 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 Turkey 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.

Turkey's rapid economic growth over the last decades has been accompanied by consistent improvement in human development. In the latest Human Development Report of 2014, Turkey is listed in the "High Human Development" category, ranking 72nd out of 188 countries.

Turkey has also made substantial progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) since 2000. Among the most notable examples, the country has accomplished remarkable progress in poverty reduction. Moreover, according to national statistics, the percentage of the population living below the national poverty line decreased significantly, down to 16.3 per cent in 2014.

As you are all well aware, notwithstanding such accelerated growth and the poverty reduction efforts, some relevant imbalances persist in socio-economic structure and income levels, both across rural and urban settlements and across the regions. In particular, regional disparities in Turkey have led to significant internal migration, mainly from central Anatolia and the central eastern, north-eastern and south-eastern regions of Turkey.

There is evidence of income disparity even within project areas, and projects that target 'poverty pockets' need to be carefully designed and implemented to avoid capture of benefits by non-poor farmers.

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

The evaluation finds that Turkey and IFAD have developed a solid and strategic partnership. Over the last 30 years, IFAD has supported ten projects in Turkey for a total cost of US\$661.1 million, of which IFAD has provided US\$189 million. Activities have directly benefited 1.3 million households.

In general, projects supported by IFAD over the past 13 years – the period analysed by the country programme evaluation – have been effective in improving the incomes and quality of life of the rural poor. The greatest achievements were made through rural infrastructure initiatives, which increased agricultural productivity and promoted commercialization. The current focus of targeting on an area basis has been appropriate and needs to continue in the future, until poverty reduction is fully achieved. As you are aware the Sustainable Development Goals, approved in September last year, aim at achieving zero hunger by 2030.

Moreover, the most successful aspects of the IFAD project portfolio have occurred where the interventions were combined within the same village in specific value/supply chains, with a better potential to create development momentum rather than scattered interventions.

There are still some areas that deserve further attention.

Firstly, the evaluation finds that the sustainability of benefits of the projects has remained a concern in view of an inadequate

involvement of the private sector in supply chain management, inadequate preparation of local institutions for taking over infrastructure, insufficient collaboration with the rural financial sector, and a focus on high-cost agricultural technology packages.

Secondly, the access to project benefits remains a challenge for poorer farmers, women and youth. Future programming should be more precise in identifying target groups, use participatory processes, relevant interventions and new partners to help include these groups in project decision-making.

Thirdly, the non-lending activities - knowledge management, policy dialogue and partnership-building - were given a low priority. Policy engagement was limited and conducted mainly through the projects and within a narrow cycle. IFAD's partnerships with other institutions were found to be weak, as much as knowledge management activities.

Last but not least, the evaluation recommends strengthening the strategic focus on women, through gender action plans and gender equality in access to project resources and benefits at the project design stage. Likewise, a strengthened focus on youth in the new country strategy and project designs is recommended.

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 Turkey for rural poverty reduction.

In closing, I would like to quote Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, founder and father of the Republic of Turkey, who once said

*"Turkey's true master is the peasant"*

Let us get inspired by this quote and find together ways to make the IFAD partnership with the Government of Turkey even stronger for a sustainable and inclusive transformation of the rural sector in the country.

I thank you for your attention.