

**Statement of the Director IOE
Sub-Regional Evaluation (SRE) of countries in fragile
situations: Learning from the G5 countries + Nigeria**

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Distinguishes IFAD Board members

Dear colleagues Directors

Mr the Representative of the Secretary of the G5 Sahel

Mr the Secretary General of the Ministry in charge of Livestock
of the Republic of Niger

Mr the Coordinator of West African pastoralist network

Dear colleagues participants

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to this virtual learning event on findings and recommendations of the sub-regional evaluation conducted by IOE in 2021 and 2022.

To start, allow me to express my appreciation to the Programme Management Department, particularly to the Associate Vice-President, Mr. Donal Brown, the IFAD West and Central Africa Division team, especially the six IFAD teams of selected countries for their fruitful collaboration throughout the evaluation process.

I also acknowledge the work of the evaluation team, led by Mr Maximin Kodjo, IOE Lead Evaluation Officer, with the contribution of national and international consultants. Ms Cristina Spagnolo,

Evaluation Assistant, provided efficient administrative support to the team and to the organization of today's event.

This was the first sub-regional evaluation carried out by IOE, which assessed rural development challenges that are common for the five G5 Sahel countries and Nigeria. Indeed, the six selected countries (i.e. Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania, Mali, Niger and the Northern region of Nigeria) are facing similar fragility challenges featured with: (i) deep economic poverty, (ii) social disruption; (iii) environmental and climate change burdens; (iv) institutional weaknesses; (v) medium to high intensity of conflict and insecurity.

Considering that context, the overall objective of the evaluation was to identify main lessons to learn for improving IFAD's engagement and supports in the sub-region, aligned with its mandate of enabling rural transformation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me highlight the importance of this kind of event, which is core for the utility of the evaluation. Indeed, its purpose is to promote the effective usage of recommendations, by facilitating a discussion between critical stakeholders on the evaluation findings. As such, IOE is always keen to organise learning events to conclude such important evaluations.

I would like to mention briefly few findings and lessons identified by the evaluation before inviting the lead evaluator to make a presentation.

The SRE found that IFAD's supported operation have contributed to build absorptive and adaptive capacities of beneficiaries. Empowering producers' and community-based organisations to deliver effectively has been instrumental in such fragile contexts, and those organisations can play a critical to sustain achievements and to foster social cohesion.

On the other hand, the evaluation identified gaps related to IFAD's delivery in the fragile contexts of Sahel.

Among these challenges, the evaluation identified the lack of guidance for country teams on how to conduct holistic fragility analyses and using the results to define pertinent actions to be implemented. Finally two important constraints were: (i) the fact that the country director were not residing (at the time of the evaluation) in five out of six of these countries over the evaluation period and; (ii) limited flexibility of IFAD financial instruments to adapt to situations of escalating conflicts or shocks.

As evaluators, we have provided an impartial assessment of IFAD's engagement in these situations of fragility. Now, we can gain better insights on how recommendations made trigger actions by critical actors.

I thank you for your attention.