

## **REFLECTIONS BY ESA RD**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished colleagues,

1. In addition to the statement on behalf of our Associate Vice President, I would like to reiterate that, as a division, the East and Southern Africa team strongly welcomes and supports the findings and recommendations of this CSPE.
2. The country team is taking careful steps to ensure we take each recommendation into account in our work in the country moving forward.
3. Under the first recommendation to explicitly include in the next strategic objectives aspects of pro-poor value chain development, we will place particular emphasis on continuing to;
  - promote financial inclusion by establishing linkages between farmers' cooperatives and financial institutions. This will enable smallholders to access credit, savings, and insurance services, which are crucial for investment in their value chain activities.
  - moreover, we will encourage value addition activities at the local level by providing technical support and training to smallholders. This will include promoting post-harvest processing, packaging, and quality control measures to enhance the value of their products.
4. With regard to the second recommendation to enhance resilience building, especially in remote fragile rural areas,

please allow me to state that addressing the drivers and impacts of fragility is a priority area for IFAD's thirteenth replenishment so we fully align ourselves with this recommendation. In addition to promoting sustainable agricultural practices as highlighted earlier, we will:

- strengthen local institutions and governance by fostering participatory decision-making processes to enable communities to better respond to crises. This includes supporting farmer cooperatives, community-based organizations, and local governance structures to effectively coordinate disaster preparedness and response efforts as well as;
- support efforts to enhance access to financial services by facilitating access to affordable credit, insurance, and savings mechanisms that can enable rural communities to manage risks, recover from shocks, and invest in adaptive measures.

5. In response to the third recommendation to consolidate and sustain results achieved in relation to financial inclusion, key actions based on effective practices will include:

- promoting digital financial services to leverage digital technologies, such as mobile banking and digital wallets to enhance access to financial services and;
- raising awareness through targeted campaigns and financial education programs to improve financial literacy among the population, especially in underserved areas. This will empower individuals with knowledge about

financial products, budgeting, savings, and responsible borrowing.

Ladies and gentlemen

6. With regard to the fourth recommendation to upscale or replicate the implementation of the gender transformative approach to other projects, we will continue to

- build capacity and awareness by conducting gender sensitization and training programs for project staff, government officials, and stakeholders to enhance their understanding of gender issues and build their capacity to integrate gender considerations into project design, implementation, and monitoring. This will include gender mainstreaming workshops, gender-responsive budgeting training, and gender-focused data collection and analysis.
- Additionally, we will engage women's groups and stakeholders in project planning, implementation, and monitoring to ensure their perspectives and needs are taken into account. Collaborating with women's groups to identify strategies for enhancing women's participation and leadership in agriculture and rural development is key to promoting gender inclusion.

7. Finally, in response to the last recommendation to facilitate the sharing of lessons to enhance the consolidation of results achieved within the programme and the national agriculture sector, we will:

- continue to document successful interventions, approaches, and experiences throughout the program and

the national agriculture sector to develop comprehensive case studies, reports, and success stories that highlight key achievements, innovative strategies, and lessons learned. These will be disseminated through various channels such as websites, publications, workshops, and conferences.

- furthermore, we will foster learning networks and communities of practice where stakeholders can share experiences, exchange knowledge, and collaborate. These networks can bring together project staff, government officials, researchers and other relevant actors to engage in peer learning, dialogue, and joint problem-solving.

Ladies and gentlemen

8. I very much look forward to seeing these recommendations translate into tangible results. I will personally ensure each recommendation is taken into serious account during the implementation of the new COSOP.
9. Finally, I would again like to thank IOE for their excellent analysis and collaboration during the evaluation, and the Government of Ethiopia for their continued support and partnership with IFAD to help improve the livelihoods of the rural poor in the country.

Thank you and back to you Chair.