

# Closing Remarks at IFAD Innovation Talks No. 6 on “The role of the public sector in the assimilation process of agri-technologies: The Israeli Model”.

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**As Prepared for Delivery**

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Thank you for the introduction.

Today I was delighted that we were able to have the opportunity to get a 360-degree look at the agricultural innovation model of Israel. This model has been successful, not only at developing high performing and top quality technologies, but most importantly at designing and implementing innovative processes and programmes that have contributed to their successful adoption by farmers. From this, farmers have been able to increase their incomes and build resilience – thus making what we learnt today extremely relevant for us at IFAD.

In 2019, we approved a new ICT for Development Strategy – otherwise known as ICT4D – to provide us with a framework for leveraging technology to increase development impact and improve the economic and social conditions of poor rural people.

ICT4D in agriculture has the potential to help increase farmers’ productivity and incomes, strengthen resilience to climate change and improve access to and participation in markets, in particular for vulnerable groups. Further benefits can be

garnered when these technologies are accompanied by inclusive infrastructure, legislation and designed with a user-centric and sustainable approach in mind.

I echo the words of Minister Forer during his opening remarks on the importance of sharing knowledge and building capabilities and partnerships between the public and the private sector as essential components in our innovation initiatives to achieve long-term and sustainable results.

Our colleagues from the Israel Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development highlighted the importance of building capacity to make technology accessible and to design the right incentives for farmers to adopt innovative technologies.

At IFAD, we are very much aware of the fact that, especially women producers and young rural entrepreneurs often do not have equal access to technologies; and even when they do, there are various barriers that impede their optimal use.

Indeed, in 2017, for example, only 30 percent of young people used the Internet in least-developed countries compared to 94 percent in developed countries; and only 25 percent of users of digital agriculture solutions in sub-Saharan Africa are women. IFAD is committed to addressing and overcoming these challenges by establishing partnerships with governments and the private sector and designing programmes and tools that are human-centred and focused on delivering results tailored to the specific context.

We are expecting to see significant growth in innovation and digitalization in agriculture in the next decade, which we aim to harness to be able to deliver greater impact for our beneficiaries. Today's innovation talk has emphasised how this impact can be achieved more effectively and with more agility through the establishment of public-private partnerships where the Government fosters innovation for target groups, and in areas where the private sector would not traditionally invest.

I appreciated the contributions by Michal in this respect; and the emphasis on ensuring that we do not lose focus from the main objective, which is to deliver real solutions that are tailored for, and designed and implemented in partnership with, our end-users.

Marc highlighted a point that I believe is key in delivering results, which is ensuring that in the design phase of interventions, efforts are dedicated to scanning the environment and discovering the habits of end-users to ensure that the right channels and tools are accompanying the dissemination of technologies. As he said, the objective is not the development of innovative technologies for the sake of developing innovative technologies; but to find real solutions to real problems and ensuring that those solutions are being delivered in an affordable, sustainable and timely manner.

As Rossana mentioned in her intervention, IFAD plays a key role in designing programmes and financing mechanisms in partnership with governments to foster innovation and invest in evidence-based interventions for poverty reduction in rural areas. We look forward to enhancing our partnership with the Israel Ministry of Agriculture and the Israel Innovation Authority to enable us to work with other member countries and the private sector to help us do that better.

In this respect, the interventions by Hargit from the Israel Innovation Authority and the representatives of the private sector were fundamental to describe how the public and private sector can effectively design programmes and processes together that create incentives for farmers to engage and become partners themselves in the adoption of innovative technologies. I was particularly interested in listening to the description of the programme in Mexico and how it has achieved success by making the end-user a key partner in the supply chain. A key component of the Israeli model is the ability of the public sector to create spaces, through collaboration with tech-incubators and startups, to foster the origination and testing of ideas that can deliver real solutions.

I would like to thank our partners and speakers in today's session, in particular, Minister Oded Forer and Yakov Poleg, Head of the Centre for Foreign Trade and International Cooperation, and Galit Aber Harari and Daniel Werner, as well as all our colleagues at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development for their partnership in designing and delivering today's IFAD Innovation Talk. Special thanks also to the representatives of the Israel Innovation Authority, GrowingIL, InNegev Technology Incubator and Agro-Scout.

I would also like to thank our audience and the members of the IFAD innovation Network for joining our events consistently and contributing to enriching our learning events with your questions and comments. Last but not least, thanks to the IFAD Innovation Talks team at the Change, Delivery and Innovation Unit at IFAD.

This is the last talk before the summer break, so I wish you all a great summer and look forward to seeing you in October for the next IFAD Innovation Talk.