

**STATEMENT OF MS LAKSHMI MENON,
Head of IFAD's Corporate Services Department**

**NATIONAL ROUNDTABLE WORKSHOP
NEPAL COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION**

Kathmandu, 23 January 2013

1. Hon. Prime Minister;
2. Hon. Ministers;
3. Authorities and Officials of the Government of Nepal;
4. Representatives of multilateral and bi-lateral aid organisations;
5. IFAD-supported project staff; and

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to have this unique opportunity to address the participants of this National Round Table Workshop, which has been jointly organized by the Government of Nepal and IFAD.

I am pleased to convey to you the best wishes that Dr Kanayo Nwanze, the President of IFAD sends with me for the all-round success of the partnership between the Government of Nepal and the Fund.

Being in Nepal now is particularly special for me, as it is the first time - since I joined IFAD in the middle of 2012 - that I have the opportunity to undertake such a country visit. In fact, as a relative new comer in the IFAD Senior Management Team, this Nepal country programme evaluation workshop provides an ideal opportunity for me to understand better the role of IFAD in an important partner country.

This workshop is the culmination of the Nepal country programme evaluation by IFAD's Independent Office of Evaluation, which I understand has provided an opportunity to reflect and discuss the results and lessons learned from the partnership between IFAD and Government in promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development in Nepal. I therefore eagerly look forward to listening with attention to the comments and views of the participants who have taken time to join us

on this special occasion.

I have had the privilege to undertake field visits in the past two days to two IFAD-funded projects in Nepal, namely the Leasehold Forestry and Livestock Programme and the Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF-II). This gave me the possibility to meet with beneficiaries as well as see some of the development activities promoted by these projects on the ground. Among other issues, I was able to better appreciate the opportunities and challenges of supporting rural poor people improve their food security, ensure sustainable environmental and forest management, have better access to rural finance and reliable markets as well as earn more income for better overall livelihoods. I take this occasion to commend all those concerned in designing and implementing IFAD-financed projects for their hard work, and also thank authorities both at the national as well as the local levels who were instrumental in organising the field visits.

Nepal is an important country for IFAD. It has been working in Nepal since the Fund started its operation. The total amount of IFAD financing for the 14 projects funded has been around USD 200 million. Currently, five of the 14 projects are still under implementation.

Projects financed by IFAD have contributed to, among other areas, developing rural roads and market infrastructure, improving seed production and irrigation, forest management, and enhancing food security. In IFAD, we take particular pride in working with the Government of Nepal in empowering and serving rural poor women and small farmers by building institutions at the community as well as the government levels. Our partnership with the Government of Nepal in giving rural poor access to land under long term lease, along with access to micro-finance services, is yet another example of assisting rural poor households to move out of poverty by offering innovative solutions.

The Nepal country programme evaluation, which the IFAD management appreciates and supports, has confirmed the good results achieved and noted areas we need to collectively address to ensure even stronger outcomes in the reduction of rural poverty in the future.

I would like to use this statement also to brief you all about some of the recent developments at IFAD. The Fund successfully concluded in December 2011 the ninth replenishment of its resources. In this regard, at the IFAD Governing Council in February 2012, all Member States collectively agreed on a replenishment level of USD 1.5 billion for the ninth replenishment, which represents a 25 per cent increase over the contributions made by Member States in the eighth replenishment in 2008. This is particularly significant, as this sizeable increase in the ninth replenishment came in a period of considerable financial and economic constraints in many donor countries. This is a further confirmation by Member States of their confidence in IFAD and support towards the organization's specialised mandate of assisting small farmers in rural areas to promote agriculture as an engine of growth and economic transformation.

In light of the level of resources made available to IFAD in the ninth replenishment, the Fund will be able to commit new loans and grants of approximately USD 1 billion from its own resources globally each year - during the period starting from 2013 to 2015. Moreover, the Fund is exploring options to mobilise additional resources through innovative financing mechanisms beyond the financing generated through the regular replenishment process, with the aim of allowing the organisation to eventually to expand even further the total commitments for new activities in the future.

The Fund is also transforming its business model, to enable the institution to be a more agile, efficient and effective organisation. This

includes greater attention to the scaling up impact on the rural poor which in many cases would be supported by engagement in national policy dialogue processes. Building strategic partnerships with governments, the private sector, donors, NGOs and others is in fact the theme of IFAD's 2013 annual Governing Council, which will be held in Rome at the Fund's headquarters on 13-14 February.

On another topic, as you are aware, Nepal is one of the 40 countries where the Fund currently has its country office. Currently we are devoting our attention in strengthening these country offices including in Nepal. Through this process we hope to ensure that the country programme managers and their teams have the required infrastructure and means to support Governments and related partners in their efforts to promote the well-being of rural communities in developing countries.

With that, distinguished dignitaries and participants, I would like to reassure you of IFAD's continued commitment to supporting Nepal in its fight against rural poverty in the years to come. This workshop will provide essential inputs in defining the future priorities for the IFAD-Government country strategy and partnership. Looking from that perspective, your contributions in this workshop today would be of immense value.

I convey my best wishes for a successful outcome of today's deliberations.