

China Country Programme Evaluation

National Roundtable Workshop, Beijing, 17 July 2014

Closing Statement of the Government of China

Mr Zhang Zhengwei, IFAD Board Director for China

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure and honour to deliver this closing statement on behalf of the Government of China.

I would like to start by thanking all the participants for their active engagement and inputs in the discussions throughout the day. In particular, I would like to thank the IFAD delegation headed by the Associate Vice President, Mr John McIntire, and all other colleagues, who travelled from Rome to be with us and participate in this important dialogue. I thank the Chairman of the Evaluation Committee of IFAD's Executive Board, Mr Agus Saptono, from Indonesia, who also attended the workshop and shared his thoughts and views in the morning. I thank all participants from provincial authorities, IFAD-supported projects, colleagues from various Ministries and departments, donor organisations, academic

and research institutes, and all others, for making this event a great success.

I believe we have achieved the objectives we set at the outset of the day for the workshop, to promote a constructive dialogue on the main findings and recommendations from the first China country programme evaluation (CPE) done by the Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE) of IFAD, as well as discuss priority areas and issues for the future of the China-IFAD partnership. In this regard, we agree with the main findings and recommendations from the CPE, which provide a solid basis for preparing the next China country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP), a task that will be undertaken jointly by the IFAD Management and the Government of China next year.

The CPE has documented the satisfactory results of the activities promoted by IFAD in China. In particular, loan-funded investment projects are having positive impacts in promoting food security at the local, national and global levels, social empowerment and institution building, assets and incomes, and generally improving the livelihoods of rural people. The efficiency in delivery of projects is particular good, something that is quite unique to the China country

programme, as compared to other countries supported by IFAD.

The CPE does also show that, although good efforts have been made in recent years, more can be done in terms of scaling up impact, knowledge sharing, as well as south-south and triangular cooperation. These are of key importance to the country. In this regard, we agree with the CPE recommendation that the China country programme manager of IFAD should be out-posted from Rome to Beijing as soon as possible, as this will help improve these areas of challenges identified in the CPE. In general, the Government of China is committed to building on the successes and redress the areas identified by the CPE that require further attention in the future.

There is no doubt that the IFAD-China partnership is very important and mutually beneficial. China has to benefit from IFAD's wide experience and rich knowledge in rural poverty reduction in different countries and regions. At the same time, the experience gained through loan-funded projects in China that target small farmers, women, and other disadvantaged people in different agro-ecological situations

can also be made available in an appropriate manner for the advancement of other countries in Asia and beyond.

China looks forward to a strengthened partnership with IFAD in the future, both in terms of lending and non-lending activities. In particular, loan-funded projects that promote innovative solutions to smallholder agriculture development are fundamental. These projects can have a demonstration effect, and successful innovations can be scaled up by Government in its own policies and projects, ultimately leading to wider impacts on rural poverty across the country. The relationship between lending and non-lending is similar to the relationship between skin and hair. Without skin, there is no base for hair to grow. Similarly, without adequate and sustainable lending interventions, the performance and impact of non-lending activities will be compromised. We noted that the CPE gave a relatively lower score to non-lending activities as compared to lending activities. One of the factors that justifies weaker performance of non-lending activities is due to both limited lending activities and few resources allocated to non-lending activities.

As mentioned earlier, in the area of non-lending activities, knowledge sharing, and south-south and triangular

cooperation are a special priority for China. However, the success of such activities can only be ensured if they are properly anchored in an adequate level of lending for projects and programmes, which have as a prime focus the improvement of lives of poor people who live in the country's rural areas.

China is also committed to playing an appropriate role in the IFAD Governing Bodies including the Executive Board and the on-going consultation on the 10th replenishment of IFAD's resources, to support the organisation set its priorities and policy agenda moving forward. China considers IFAD to be a very important multilateral organisation with a specialised mandate, to ensure that developed member countries and developing member countries can work together for their joint global development agenda, based on their respective resources and competitive advantages. We will work with other members to ensure that IFAD maintains its relevance to all developing members, including LICs, MICs and Fragile States, and continues on the path to becoming a centre of excellent and the premier organisation for rural poverty reduction with a focus smallholder agriculture development.

In closing, once again, I would like to thank you all for your valuable inputs that will serve to further strengthen the China-IFAD partnership, a partnership that is based on mutual trust and respect, and one that can have a wider impact for the benefit of rural people in all regions. In particular, at this stage, I would like to thank IOE for an excellent CPE report, and for their energies and efforts throughout the evaluation process. IOE openly shared knowledge and experience with its Chinese counterparties and fostered a two way learning process throughout the CPE, and has been responsive and listened to our comments and concerns. This CPE has once again confirmed that IOE is at the cutting edge amongst the evaluation offices across the multilateral and bilateral aid architecture. I would also like to thank AVP Mr John McIntire and his China team for their commitment and prompt follow-up actions to the recommendations of the CPE to further strengthen the China country programme.

Thank you for your attention.