

**STATEMENT of Mr Oscar A. Garcia,
DIRECTOR OF THE INDEPENDENT OFFICE OF EVALUATION OF IFAD**

- 1. Honourable Mr Domingos Lambo, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Economy and**
- 2. Mr Adriano Ubisse, Director Treasury, Ministry of Economy and Finance**
- 3. Ms Isabel Sumar, National Director of Cooperation, Ministry of Economy and Finance**
- 4. Distinguished authorities and Officials of the Government of Mozambique and other Development Agencies; IFAD Colleagues,**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am truly honoured and pleased to be here with you in this Round Table Workshop, co-organized by the Independent Office of Evaluation of the International Fund for Agricultural Development –IFAD and the Ministry of Economy and Finance, at the conclusion of the independent evaluation of the IFAD Country Strategy and Programme 2010-2016 in the Republic of Mozambique.

I would like to express a heartfelt appreciation to the Government of Mozambique, in particular the Ministry of Economy and Finance, for their invaluable support and collaboration throughout

this country strategy and programme evaluation process, and especially in the organization of today's workshop. I would also like to thank my colleagues in the Programme Management Department. I am grateful to Mr. Sana Jatta, the Director of IFAD's East and Southern Africa Division, who honours us with his presence, to Mr. Paulo Silveiro, who represents the Associate Vice President for Programme Management Department, and the IFAD Mozambique Country Team for their valuable inputs, openness and constructive attitude towards this country programme evaluation in general.

I would like to thank Mr. Miguel Torralba, Lead Evaluation Officer and Ms Tulia Aiazzi, senior consultant who ably conducted this comprehensive evaluation.

As a part of the events related to this workshop, my team and I have had the opportunity to visit selected field activities of interventions co-funded by IFAD in the Massingir District in the Gaza province. This has given the delegation an opportunity to directly hold discussions with beneficiaries and their groups, project staff, district-level government authorities, and to see project activities on the ground. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the authorities of the Local Government, and the relevant partners for their warm hospitality and constructive engagement.

As some of you may know, this is the second country strategy and programme evaluation (CSPE) carried out by the Independent Office of Evaluation in Mozambique. The first one was completed in 2009. Given that our office conducts only 5 country programme evaluations every year in all regions of the world, having conducted two country programme evaluations in this country may be considered as an indicator of the importance IFAD attributes to its partnership and overall collaboration with Mozambique.

The purpose of the Mozambique country strategy and programme evaluation has been, therefore, to provide an impartial and rigorous assessment of performance that can assist the Government, IFAD and other concerned partners in developing the next country strategy - COSOP - and new projects financed by IFAD in the country.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We will be discussing the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation.

In particular, the workshop will provide valuable inputs for the preparation of the evaluation's Agreement at Completion Point, a short document that summarizes the main recommendations,

which the Government of Mozambique and IFAD Management will agree to adopt and implement within a specific timeframe.

The evaluated Country Strategy and Programme had been designed and partly implemented in a context of steady growth of macro-economic indicators, which have however, triggered less than expected reductions in poverty. The Fourth National Poverty Assessment Report 2014/2015 found that welfare levels had improved since the last assessment in 2008/09, but the gap between rural and urban zones is still large and persistent.

Agriculture employs 81 per cent of the labour force; smallholder farmers account for more than 80 per cent of food crops production, although less than 10 per cent of the households market their surpluses.

The Government adopted the Strategic Plan for the Development of the Agricultural Sector (PEDSA) 2011-2020, as the strategic guide for medium-long term agricultural development, whose objective is 'Contribute to the food security and incomes of agricultural producers, through a competitive and sustainable approach that ensures social and gender equity'.

IFAD maintains a long-standing partnership with Mozambique in agriculture and rural development. The IFAD-supported programme in the country includes investments focused on

developing value chains for horticultural products, cassava and sesame, livestock, and fisheries, and helping producers to increase production and access financing.

The current Country Strategy (2011-2017) focuses on increasing the production and productivity of agriculture and fisheries working with economically active poor and on facilitating their integration into profitable and accessible markets. The total portfolio cost since the start of IFAD operations in Mozambique in 1982 is US\$ 340 million.

Later this morning, my colleague, Ms Tullia Aiazzi, will present you the main findings and recommendations of this evaluation.

Hence, at this stage, I will limit myself to highlighting only a few findings from the evaluation.

The evaluation found a strong level of project alignment with Government priorities and notes that IFAD was able to leverage additional resources thanks to its credibility as a good partner.

Positive impacts in Mozambique outlined in the report include significant capacity development at the institutional, community and individual level, improvements in access to micro-credit for household assets and petty-trade through Savings and Credit Associations and empowerment of women thanks to literacy initiatives.

Notwithstanding the significant achievements noted above, there are still few issues that deserve further attention. First, projects did not explicitly include objectives or approaches aimed at tackling overarching goals for improvement of food security and nutrition. This is a major challenge for the Government and IFAD to consider in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The SDGs and in particular SDG2, call for a concerted action to end hunger, ensure global food security and promote sustainable agriculture. Second; while the programme - achieved the objective of helping the economically active poor, it is important to ensure that all poor rural producers are included, not just those who already have access to fertilizers, improved seeds and pesticides, or large engines for their boats. In particular, we must ensure that targeting strategies consider more vulnerable groups, including women, youth, and people living with HIV. Against the backdrop of the SDGs, the challenge is no longer to reduce poverty but to eradicate it by 2030.

Hence, I invite you to absorb the inputs provided by this independent evaluation and engage frankly and constructively in a dialogue to explore ways to enhance the collaboration between IFAD and the government of Mozambique for rural poverty eradication.

In light of the important achievements so far, and the challenges that confront us in the future, IFAD-Mozambique partnership

holds immense promise towards achieving a more inclusive and sustainable transformation of the rural sector.

I thank you for your attention.