

Sudan Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation Virtual final workshop, 22 June 2020

Statement by Mr Fabrizio Felloni Interim Officer-in-Charge, Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD

Mr Undersecretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Mr Undersecretary, Ministry of Animal Resources

Mr Ambassador of the Republic of Sudan to Italy

Authorities of the Government of Sudan

IFAD colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to be part of this virtual workshop, co-organized by the Government of Sudan and the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD, as the final step of the country strategy and programme evaluation in Sudan. Due to the COVID-19 situation, unfortunately we were not able to organize the workshop in Khartoum with more participants. However, I am glad that we have this alternative to connect remotely.

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Government of Sudan, in particular to the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, for their invaluable support and collaboration throughout this evaluation.

I would also like to thank my colleagues in the IFAD Programme Management Department for their support, in particular to Ms Khalida Bouzar, Director of IFAD's Near East, North Africa and Europe Division and Ms Dina Saleh, who heads the IFAD Office in Egypt and today represents the Division. Thanks also to Mr Tarek Ahmed, IFAD country director for Sudan, and Mr Ahmed Subahi, country programme officer.

Finally, I would like to thank Ms Fumiko Nakai, Senior Evaluation Officer and her team, who ably and efficiently conducted this comprehensive evaluation.

Before delving into the main findings of the evaluation, let me highlight the importance of the independent evaluation function. Our office, the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD, reports directly to the Executive Board. Our mandate is to undertake impartial and evidence-based evaluations of projects, country programmes and corporate policies, to assess the results achieved, and generate lessons that can be used for greater impact on the quality of performance, and on people's lives.

The Sudan country strategy and programme evaluation provides an impartial and rigorous assessment that will pave the way for the Government, IFAD and other partners to develop the next country strategy. The findings, conclusions and recommendations of this evaluation will lay the ground to the preparation of the agreement at completion point, a short document summarizing the main evaluation recommendations and follow-up actions agreed upon by the Government of Sudan and IFAD Management.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

IFAD has provided uninterrupted development support in Sudan since 1979. It is one of the country's major partners in agricultural and rural development.

I will now briefly highlight a few key findings from the evaluation. My colleague Ms Fumiko Nakai will give a more comprehensive presentation.

IFAD's strategy has been largely coherent and relevant to the context and the needs of the rural poor. With a focus on traditional rainfed agriculture, it has been crucial to empower communities to adopt sustainable practices to manage natural resource and to manage related conflicts. The IFAD portfolio has registered an overall satisfactory performance, with particular successes in crop and livestock production, livelihood diversification, access

to finance, and natural resource management. It also addressed basic needs such as access to drinking water. Underlying these results, there has been remarkable impact in terms of human and social capital, and empowerment of rural communities and women.

On the other hand, there are also some areas to be strengthened.

Firstly, greater attention is required to improve the sustainability of project benefits. This is the case especially for the aspects that require government resources and commitments, such as large-scale infrastructure.

Secondly, IFAD-financed projects have generally operated through teams of specifically assigned state- and locality-level government staff. This set-up has been effective for delivering project services and has provided opportunities for these staff to gain experience with the rural communities. However, there could have been greater attention to strengthening the institutional capacity of the counterpart Government agencies, with a longer-term perspective.

Lastly, most projects have integrated policy support and have contributed to studies and the preparation of policy frameworks, in particular in the area of natural resource governance. However, the results from the projects could have been used more effectively to influence government policies at higher levels.

It is our hope that the new political context will advance the scope for promoting and scaling up the portfolio's important achievements even further.

As evaluators, we have provided an impartial assessment of IFAD's programme in Sudan. Now, with your support, we can gain a better understanding of future opportunities and ways forward, while promoting a more inclusive, and sustainable transformation of the rural sector.

I thank you for your attention.