

Republic of Guinea Bissau
Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation
Virtual National Workshop – 12 December 2022

**Introductory Statement by Dr Indran Naidoo, Director of
the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD**

- Mr the Advisor to the State Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Distinguished representatives of the Government of Guinea Bissau,
- Representatives of IFAD, Partner institutions and International organizations,
- Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to be part of this virtual national workshop, organized by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD in collaboration with the Government of Guinea Bissau and the West and Central Africa Division of IFAD. This workshop follows the finalization of the country strategy and programme evaluation, implemented in the first half of this year. It provides an opportunity to share and discuss the main findings and recommendations with the Government, IFAD and main stakeholders of the IFAD's country programme in Guinea Bissau.

I would like to start by expressing my appreciation to the Government officials and relevant stakeholders for their collaboration on this evaluation. Our appreciation goes to the project teams and partner organizations for sharing insights, contributing to the field mission, and responding to numerous requests for data and information from the evaluation team. I would also like to recognize the contribution of the IFAD Programme Management Department, in particular: Mr Donal

Brown, Associate Vice-President of the programme management department; Mr Sana Jatta, Regional Director ad-Interim, Bernard Hien, appointed Director for West and Central Africa Division; Mr Gianluca Capaldo, former IFAD country director; Marcelin Norvilus, current country director; and the WCA regional team.

Finally, I would like to thank the evaluation team, led by Mr Maximin Kodjo, Lead Evaluation Officer, and the team of national and international consultants. Ms Daniela Asprella, Evaluation Assistant, provided efficient administrative support to the team and to the organization of today's event.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me first highlight the importance of the independent evaluation function. The Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD undertakes impartial and evidence-based evaluations of projects, country programmes, thematic and corporate matters, to assess the results achieved and to generate lessons to enhancing the impact of IFAD-supported operations.

Since 1983, IFAD has financed five projects in Guinea Bissau with US\$45.3 million, for a total cost of US\$116.2 million (including national contributions and international co-financing). Two projects were closed by anticipation among the five, due to fiduciary challenges. During the past four decades, the country faced critical challenges linked to fragility, and this undermined development efforts and support, not only of IFAD but also of other international partners. Therefore, it is my sincere hope that this evaluation, which covered the period 2008 to 2022, will contribute to improving the effectiveness of the strategic partnership between the Government of

Guinea Bissau and IFAD in the coming years.

The evaluation found that the impact of the partnership between IFAD and the Government of Guinea Bissau was limited due to deep institutional weaknesses within the country (at both governmental and non-governmental levels). Nevertheless, IFAD's strategic choices were adequate in terms of: ensuring the transition between reconstruction and development activities; the effective targeting of poor and vulnerable people; and in addressing themes and approaches aligned with interventions in fragile situations, for instance access to social services and infrastructure, community driven development.

The partnership with IFAD contributed to improve the exploitation of agricultural resources that were underutilized, smallholders' food self-sufficiency and enabling market surpluses. This was achieved through the rehabilitation of lowlands for the intensification of rice cropping systems, based on endogenous knowledge and the introduction of improved farming practices and techniques.

On the other hand, some areas deserve attention.

IFAD supported programme did not include an explicit strategy to address the weak capacity of institutions to provide effective oversight and support services in rural areas. Moreover, the evaluation found no mechanism that allows governmental stakeholders to review the progress of projects and to understand why results were achieved or not; moreover, over the evaluation period there was no real exchange of experiences and coordination among partners working within the rural sector.

In terms of rice production systems, support was insufficient for the post-production segments namely: processing, marketing and access to market. To that effect, the farmers and grassroots organisations are not, for the moment, able to provide supporting services (such as inputs provisions, aggregation and marketing) to fill the gap linked to weak public institutions.

As evaluators, we have provided an impartial assessment of the country strategy and programme in Guinea Bissau. Now, with your support, we can gain a better understanding of future opportunities and ways to overcome constraints in promoting inclusive, sustainable and resilient rural transformation in the country.

I thank you for your attention.