

Colombian Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation
Virtual National Workshop, 21 March 2023

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

- Her Excellency Ms Ligia Margarita Quessep Bitar, Ambassador of the Government of the Republic of Colombia and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Agencies in Rome
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- Mr Juan Camilo Saretzki Forero, Minister-Counsellor and alternative permanent representative of the Government of the Republic of Colombia in Rome
- Mr Jorge Ricardo Torres Rueda, Director of International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr Nicolas Peña, Director of Productive Capacity and Income Generation, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Ms Maria Olga Peña Mariño, Director of Rural Development, Department of National Planning
- Mr Yesid Parra Vera, Director of Investment and Public Finance, Department of National Planning

- Distinguished representatives of the Government of the Republic of Colombia, representatives of IFAD, partner institutions, international organizations and producer associations

- 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 Republic of Colombia and the Latin America and Caribbean Division of IFAD. This workshop follows the finalization of the country strategy and programme evaluation, and provides an opportunity to share and discuss the main findings and recommendations with the Government, IFAD and other stakeholders and partners.

I would like to start by expressing my appreciation to the Government, in particular, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for hosting the event and to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, for their collaboration on this evaluation. Thanks also to the National Coordination Unit of Project “El Campo Emprende” at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development , for their support to the evaluation mission in 2022.

I recognize the support of the IFAD Programme Management Department, in particular: Mr Donal Brown, Associate Vice-President; Mrs Rossana Polastri, Director of IFAD's Latin American and Caribbean Division; Mrs Maija Peltola, IFAD country director for Colombia.

Finally, I thank the evaluation team, initially led by Simona Somma and then by Mr Maximin Kodjo Kouessi, Lead Evaluation Officer, with the support of Fabrizio Felloni, Deputy Director. Shaun Ryan and Antonella Sisti, provided efficient administrative support to the team and to the organization of today’s event. Thanks to the consultants who contributed to the evaluation analysis and event organization: Claudia Ranaboldo, José Antonio Peres Arenas, Giovanni Redondo,

Daniel Wiesner, Federica Lomiri, Alice Formica.

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 and corporate policies, to assess the results achieved and to generate lessons to enhance the impact of IFAD-supported interventions in improving rural livelihoods and enabling rural transformation.

In Colombia, since 1981, IFAD has financed four projects with US\$74 million, for a total project cost of US\$187 million. IFAD has consistently supported-under the demand approach-the rural initiatives and business plans of small-scale farmers and entrepreneurs. This was the first independent country strategy and programme evaluation. The objectives of this evaluation were to: assess the results and performance of the IFAD-supported strategy and programme since 2008; and provide findings and recommendations to inform the next IFAD country strategy and the future partnership between IFAD and the Government.

Ladies and gentlemen,

My colleague Fabrizio Felloni and Ms Claudia Ranaboldo will deliver a more comprehensive presentation later, but I would like to highlight a few key findings from the evaluation.

The evaluation noted major achievements in the diversification of

rural strategies for the poorest population, including indigenous peoples, afro-colombian communities, women and youth, in complex and post conflict territories. Notable results on the ground included empowerment of marginalized rural actors, strengthening local capacities for resilience and associative management in very different rural contexts.

IFAD-funded interventions helped restore social capital and cohesion. This helped build a more dynamic environment for creating jobs and income opportunities in rural Colombia. It also promoted rural –urban economic interactions and economic growth in intermediate towns.

On the other hand, there are areas for improvement that deserve future attention.

Firstly, more needs to be done for sustainability, on three levels: i) the economic and financial sustainability of business local plans; ii) environmental sustainability through a broader territorial and agro-ecosystem vision; and iii) institutional sustainability, especially through greater collaboration with local governments.

Furthermore, it will be important to increase cooperation with other international, national and territorial agencies and institutions; establish more systematic dialogue on public policies and strengthen strategies for knowledge management and communication. Hopefully this will help increase the size, coherence and development results.

As evaluators, we have provided an impartial assessment of IFAD's programme in Colombia. Now, with your support, we can gain a better understanding of future opportunities and ways to overcome constraints to promote inclusive, sustainable and resilient transformation of the rural economy.

I thank you for your attention.