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**High-level roundtable on “Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions
through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and
addressing related challenges”**

Statement submitted by

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Palais des Nation**

Statement by
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Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Introduction and thanks

1. Let me the outset convey the apologies of Mr. Gilbert Houngbo who recently took over as the sixth President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) – and is well known to the international development community here in Geneva. He was in Geneva a couple of weeks ago and regrets not participating in this high level Roundtable, personally.
2. We wish to thank you for hosting this important Annual meeting focusing on the role of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) in achieving Poverty eradication in all its forms and dimensions.

Two years on

Mr Chair

3. Two years ago the global development partnership came together to discuss how to shape the near future – when the UN General Assembly approved the Agenda 2030. The world, our world, has been changing rapidly in that time.
4. Two years ago, we took a pledge to double agricultural productivity and incomes of small scale producers by 2030; ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition – now, we must deliver within the 13 years left.
5. Through platforms such as what the CSTD has offered today – key stakeholders are coming together in deliberations led by countries themselves. This session will contribute to the high-level Roundtable of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in July 2017, and

clearly the UNGA imperative of the delivery of the SDGs is being continually reinforced.

Distinguished delegates

6. We are mindful of the well-known global challenges that may affect this effort - needless for me to mention: climate change, environmental degradation, conflict and forced migration - all of which threaten development gains made in recent decades and undermine prospects for global stability in the years ahead.
7. All of these problems have stark rural dimensions and are intricately linked to agriculture, food security and hunger – and these are central to the agenda of this session of CSTD.
8. The need for transformation of the agricultural sector – a transformational change that is inclusive of smallholders – is now widely acknowledged at the country level, the regional level and internationally.

9. And – the health of the primary sector – Agriculture – has to be an intrinsic part of that rural transformation agenda. The Agriculture sector has the highest growth-poverty elasticity. After all some 75% of the World's poor live in rural areas.
10. Rural poverty eradication is therefore vital to achieving the SDGs – 1 and 2 – but also the entire set of indivisible and interconnected SDGs (as noted in the Report of the Secretary General and the excellent background documentation prepared for this CSTD session).
11. IFAD is the only international financial institution with a specific mandate to reduce rural poverty through investments in agriculture and inclusive rural transformation. It was established as a specialized UN agency and an international financial institution in 1977 to mobilize resources to invest in development opportunities for poor rural people. Today and over the next decade, this mandate remains

more relevant than ever, particularly in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

12. The Fund invests over USD one billion in loans and grants annually in the rural poverty eradication agenda. We work in close collaboration with borrowing country governments and local communities alike to design, supervise and assess country-led programmes and projects that support smallholders and poor rural producers.

The urgent Actions through to 2030

13. From IFAD's perspective the strategic direction and urgent actions for the next decade or so, would need to sharply focus on investment in smallholder agriculture and rural transformation – targeting the Science, Technology and innovation needs of poor women and men farmers, smallholder livestock producers, fisher folk, forest dwellers – including indigenous communities.

14. Such a strategy must be placed within a **community-based and inclusive transformation** agenda. In other words, we need to develop new approaches to innovation systems – ones that are multistakeholder, interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral in scope.
15. On the supply side, the focus should not be just about on-farm production systems but very much also off-farm – including **a broader food systems perspective** in which farming systems, post-harvest processing and value addition of storable and transportable food commodities – through pro-poor value chains – all play a part of the Agricultural Innovation System.
16. While holistic approaches to rural transformation need to be promoted – these need to be context specific – improving adoptability and adaptability among the target groups.
17. This requires new and innovative approaches to science-based technology development and diffusion – taking into account synergies and

trade-offs among socio-economic, policy, institutional and bio-physical considerations.

18. For years we have enriched the technology shelf through mission oriented research – with widespread impact and many outstanding success stories of formal STI investments also in the global agricultural research system.
19. However, most of these promising innovations continue to lie on the shelf – we need complementary investments in the rural and agricultural extension services to help diffuse promising sustainable agricultural technologies. But these might be construed as too linear an approach with a one-way-flow of knowledge from research to farmers.
20. Truly pro-poor agricultural innovation systems require a paradigm shift in terms of participatory technology development processes with an inclusive institutional architecture involving grass-roots and community based organisations playing a forward role in shaping the agricultural

advisory services agenda and in the co-generation of knowledge.

21. We also need a plurality approaches need to be pursued – including hybrid innovation platforms involving multistakeholder priority setting and research implementation.
22. We need to engage networks of actors along the value chains – the so-called missing middle of SMEs and civil society players – all of whom are key to the successful and sustainable adoption of technologies involving downstream participatory innovation processes and at scale.
23. We need to invest in a whole range of STI applications – the other end of the spectrum which includes modern Artificial Intelligence and big data – to cater for modern precision agriculture.
24. **Advanced crop research today uses remote-sensed data interpretation through drone services tailored to experimental**

field work - offering very precise and reliable statistics based on drone-sensed imagery. We are already pushing the frontiers of science and use neutral biotechnological tools such as molecular markers to speed up breeding systems.

25. A whole spectrum of simple and readily adoptable technologies are available now from efficient soils analysis tools and techniques affording mitigation of GHGs associated with some types of agriculture. Very popular is the increasing use of ICTs for price and input supply information and indeed for mobile banking – which is becoming very popular even in the far flung and remote villages of S. Asia and SSA.
26. In terms of broadening the STI policy framework – there is a need to mainstream gender, nutrition and climate change considerations – by treating them separately we have actually marginalised these cross-cutting concerns and reduced impact on poverty alleviation.

27. But some areas need special attention to better articulate the way forward in delivering on the ambitious goals of Agenda 2030. These areas include: Rural Finance & Private Sector engagement, South-South and Triangular Cooperation, and Rural Youth Employment among others.

28. Investment in international agricultural research is a key policy issue. The global agricultural research system has also made large strides – with several constituencies such as the CGIAR have undergone a reform process, one which forges productive multistakeholder partnerships. This is a huge achievement and we need to build on that through also fostering the GFAR platform that has helped organise Global Conferences for ARD – bringing all the key stakeholders around the same table.

Our global and national "investment" policies and strategies and experiences must start to relate to a range of thematic areas and instruments of development finance and other support required in the rural space. We must invest in topical issues ranging from **nutrition-sensitive agriculture to trade and inclusive agribusiness** and in regulatory **policy instruments involving responsible agricultural investment** – including land tenure, ownership and access issues.

Fertilizer use

In sub-Saharan Africa, small increases in fertilizer use could produce dramatic improvements in yields without risk to the environment. Farmers there use less than 13 kilogrammes of fertilizer per hectare, on average. This compares with 73

kilogrammes in the Middle East and North Africa, 131 kilogrammes per hectare here in Uruguay and 190 kilogrammes in East Asia and the Pacific.

IFAD invests a billion dollars in inclusive rural transformation. Our interaction through this platform that UNCTAD has provided today is important as it helps us to introspect, rationalise and develop a common vision of our engagement in the rural transformation processes, and that discourse is now increasingly embedded in the 2030 Agenda.

We recognize the need to build stronger partnerships with other development partners, the private sector and the Government particularly at the country level. This Conference gives us a great opportunity to interact with other development partners and practitioners also operating in the in rural development space. We look forward to discussing together the role of the platform and our operational content as it will

contribute to the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.

Simply put - a key challenge is implementability. A renewed Global Partnership for Development came to look beyond 2015 – the "what after the MDGs?" The 2030 Agenda which was approved at the UNGA in 2015. But - we are now already in 2017 with only 13 years left. We need urgent action but need to know how to get from here to there.

I am happy to note the presence of like-minded high-level representatives from our membership on this Round-table. You are movers and shakers in the world of development finance we look forward to hearing directly from them on their take on the trends in ODA, programming and alternative sources of finance for ARD and for taking rural transformation processes to scale. And, with other competing demands on ODA the new game in town is private sector finance – from the role of remittances (now pushing 400 billion dollars); to a

spectrum of de-risking instruments and financial products from health, production and weather-indexed based insurance – examples of what we hope to hear more about in the various panel discussions. So, the indivisible, interconnected and interlinked nature of the SDGs demands a multi-sectoral approach and a multistakeholder and an interdisciplinary approach that requires us to straddle the rural-urban nexus. We need to be holistic and the big challenge is for the UN system to deliver as one – through strategic partnerships that cut across the entire international development community. At this year’s AGA we will hear from partner countries on what they expect from us on implementing the Agenda 2030 in rural areas. The implementation of the Agenda will be country-led and their input as Platform partners will better inform our discussion on the opportunities and challenges, ahead.

In order to facilitate advanced crop research using remote-sensed data interpretation private sector operators now offer drone services tailored to experimental field work by offering very precise and reliable statistics based on drone-sensed imagery. Flying several times over a season enables agronomists / researchers to have a dynamic view on their trials and take informed decisions or draw conclusions based on reliable data. Indicators provided include but are not limited to: NDVI, biomass, chlorophyll rate, leaf area index, emergence rate, water stress, missing plants, height or flowering... Outputs are tailor-made to the trial.

Youth : we work precisely those countries that tend to be at the early stages of their demographic transitions. Owing to current or lagged high fertility effects, their population pyramids are oftentimes showing large youth cohorts, the so-called youth bulges. The latter bulges are demographic dividends awaiting to be turned into growth.

From a k-organisation to a learning organisation:

We need to build a Development Effectiveness Framework for the international community, such as those to enhance the performance of new multistakeholder initiatives, and efficient self-evaluation systems to deliver systematic training to operational staff, and contribute to foster a better culture of learning and sharing among development agencies . We need to develop practices and procedures to make constant adjustments towards excellence and lasting impact.

Notes

Embedding research in the development

context by linking loan-financed activities and grant financed research is a type of collaboration which needs professional guidance in terms of "**partnership brokerage**" between loans and research programmes (it will not occur spontaneously) and opportunities for meeting and working together, which imply devoted time and resources .

2) A new way of conducting research (in a truly collaborative manner as highlighted above) **involves professional change on the side of the researchers** but also on the part of the development agents. This new manner of constructing knowledge in an interactive way needs to be acknowledged and facilitated by ad hoc capacity building programmes, besides the provision of strong incentives.