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World Food Day 2020

Statement by
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President
IFAD

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Excellencies,

Director-General of FAO, Mr QU Dongyu

Executive Director of WFP, Mr David Beasley

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. First, let me take this opportunity to congratulate FAO on the occasion of its 75th Anniversary. It has been a long and exemplary journey and we wish you even higher achievements.
2. Hunger undoubtedly remains a major challenge. And we have heard how the COVID-19 pandemic is pushing more people into hunger.
3. We know that when crisis strikes, it is the poor and the vulnerable who suffer the most. We cannot help but be aware of this reality and to focus our attention on these most marginalized people in rural areas.
4. At a time like this, these rural people need our support even more. But we also need them. If we want strong, healthy and peaceful societies, first

we need to produce enough nutritious food for everyone.

5. That's where the world's more than 2 billion small-scale farmers come in. Despite the challenges they face, they produce more than half the calories we consume.
6. And today, with COVID-related travel restrictions interrupting food trade and upsetting logistics, their role is more prominent.
7. So how do we support them to meet their full potential?
8. **First**, we need more and smarter investment in small-scale farming. Investments in inputs like seeds, in crucial infrastructure like rural roads and storage facilities. This is what IFAD did in Cambodia in partnership with the Government to provide such support to maintain food supply in local markets during the pandemic.
9. **Second**, small-scale farmers must get their products to markets. This is even more important at a time when markets are closing and transportation services are disrupted. We need to

invest in new, innovative technologies - especially digital solutions -- to keep food markets open. In Brazil, we are connecting farmers to virtual marketplaces, to create marketing opportunities during the pandemic.

10. **Third**, building a sustainable future depends on rural resilience – I want to emphasize this. The COVID-19 pandemic compounds the threats already faced by rural people, including climate change. Unless we take action to boost resilience, climate change will push more than 100 million people into poverty. Half of this increase due to its effects on agriculture.

11. More funds need to be devoted to increasing the resilience of poor rural people and that is what we aim to do under our Rural Resilience Programme.

Ladies and gentlemen,

12. I will reiterate that if we are to grow food to nourish the population and sustain our planet, we will need to work together to increase the investments where they are needed most.

13. In closing, let me remind you some details of the investment gap in the agriculture sector highlighted in the Ceres 2030 report just released - an additional USD 14 billion a year on average are needed until 2030 to end hunger, double the incomes of 545 million small-scale farmers, and limit agricultural emissions in line with the Paris climate agreement. This means roughly doubling the amount of aid given for food security and nutrition each year. This is the task on our hands.

14. Thank you.