

World Food Day – 34<sup>th</sup> observance

*Family Farming: Feeding the world, caring  
for the earth*

Statement by IFAD Vice-President  
Michel Mordasini

16 October 2014

FAO

Rome

Her Majesty  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Esteemed colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

1. In the International Year of Family Farming, this World Food Day dedicated to feeding the world and caring for the earth, has a very special resonance.
2. Indeed it reminds us all, once again, that family farming holds the key to sustainable agriculture, lasting food security and nutrition, and better lives for the rural poor.
3. The world's 500 million smallholder family farms produce four-fifths of the food in developing countries. They are also the custodians of much of the world's agro-biodiversity. Yet today, these small-scale producers belong to the "forgotten world", the

rural areas of developing countries where three-quarters of the world's poorest people and most of the world's hungry, live. This is a terrible and tragic paradox! But it does not have to remain this way.

4. For IFAD, the answer can be heard loud and clear: invest in rural people, invest in rural youths, invest in smallholder producers.
5. Indeed, to realize their full potential, smallholder family farmers need better access to natural resources, technology, infrastructure, services and knowledge, rural finance and markets.
6. Addressing gender inequalities and discrimination, and adapting to climate change will continue to require high commitment and concrete action.
7. We therefore encourage our members to pursue their efforts to allocate more public

resources for sustainable and inclusive agricultural and rural development.

8. Recent trends are encouraging in several countries. But more is needed, also by enlisting the support of Farmers' organizations, civil society, agricultural research, development partners and the private sector.

9. In this context, the Committee on World Food Security has delivered a positive and powerful message by endorsing the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems. We are confident these voluntary principles will translate into concrete progress and benefits for the smallholder farmers and rural poor.

10. For our part, IFAD, FAO, and WFP are strengthening further our collaboration in several critical areas such as the reduction of food losses and building resilience for food security and nutrition in high-risk contexts.

11. Together we remain actively engaged in the Post-2015 dialogue, with a common and holistic vision for food systems, with concrete targets and indicators.
12. IFAD is strongly committed to an effective cooperation between the Rome-based agencies.
13. The latest report on the State of Food Insecurity in the World confirms the positive trend in reduced hunger worldwide. Our collective efforts bear fruits! But huge challenges remain, with more than 800 million human beings still suffering from chronic hunger.
14. Moreover current conflicts and humanitarian emergencies may deteriorate the situation. As a case in point, the drama of Ebola bears also the risk of a severe food crisis in Western Africa, if it continues to strangle regional trade and interfere with the next planting season.

15. Following the call by the Secretary-General for a collective UN-response, IFAD will contribute to the efforts of the WFP to assist people in the rural areas of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

16. On this World Food Day, aware of the challenges, let us renew our commitment to food security and nutrition for all. Let's reinvigorate our respective and collective efforts towards the Millennium Development Goals: we still have 440 days to achieve the MDG target of halving the number of undernourished people.

17. To succeed, let us support more actively the world's small family farmers.

Thank you!