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COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

Thirty-eighth (Special) Session

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STATEMENT BY MR. CARLOS SERE, CHIEF DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIST, INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Chairman, CFS, Director-General, FAO, Excellencies,

Dear colleagues and CFS partners,

The livelihoods of rural women and men are based upon access to and control over land, fisheries and forests. Recognition, respect - and in some cases expansion - of this asset base and of the tenure rights of poor rural people are among the fundamental conditions for them to improve their food security, invest more in agriculture and raise their incomes.

Effective and responsible governance of tenure is therefore a key requirement for the eradication of hunger and poverty, for peace and for sustainable prosperity. Increasingly as population pressure rises, global demand for food and fuel increases, and agriculture, fisheries and forest management transform themselves, it was important to put in place conditions for the sustainable management of the natural resource base.

Although tenure systems are highly diverse and depend on peoples' history and countries' sovereignty, it was time to bring together our respective experiences and collective wisdom on this subject. For IFAD the Voluntary Guidelines you are going to endorse today are a **critically important instrument to help regulate complex issues of governance of tenure in the context of food security and rural development**. IFAD has supported FAO in the development of these Voluntary Guidelines since the onset through financial and technical contributions. We participated directly in their development as a member of the Voluntary Guidelines Steering Committee and as a member of the CFS Secretariat and Advisory Group.

It is certainly the inclusive negotiation process and final approval under CFS auspices that makes these Guidelines a **truly unprecedented event**. Alongside CFS member governments this process has included multiple stakeholders; the broad range of civil society groups, in particular organizations representative of smallholder farmers, fisher-folks and indigenous peoples and a range of private sector representatives, technical agencies and foundations, all bringing in their perspectives. It entailed deep discussions - sentence by sentence - with a strong and permanent commitment of an average of

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60 to 70 countries and partners. This is what confers an exceptional legitimacy to these Guidelines and why we are confident they will be implemented with the support of all the involved parties.

Your endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines is crucially important for smallholders, fishers and forest dwellers. It is also **a signal to the world that the reformed CFS is able to work efficiently**. Hopefully, this will be the model for future work in the global partnership for the governance of food, nutrition and agriculture.

Of course your endorsement of this document is not the end but only the beginning of our efforts. IFAD will continue to support the Voluntary Guidelines and their implementation by governments at country level through its field operations, advocacy and policy dialogue activities. We must now insist on **promotion and implementation, underlining of course that States have the responsibility for implementation**. Our role, as an international development fund, is to support your efforts and to contribute to the promotion, information and explanation of the Voluntary Guidelines. IFAD stands ready to engage now, together with FAO, with the International Land Coalition and with all our in-country partners in this important next step.

Thank you very much.