

Excellencies, distinguished representatives, ladies and gentlemen,

- We gather here with an increased awareness of the critical importance of water in the context of food security. The global challenges are now more pressing than ever, with increased concerns about food security and the exacerbation of extreme weather events. Many of these challenges are closely intertwined with water, making our dialogue even more relevant.
- The nexus between water and food systems is evident, influencing every aspect of food production, processing, and preparation. Water is essential for all food system components, from fisheries and aquaculture to crops, livestock, and food processing.

- The four dimensions of water security – availability, access, stability, and quality – are intimately linked to food security and nutrition and span across multiple sectors and actors.
- These dimensions also affect the link between water, fragility and conflicts. Water scarcity and competition for limited water resources exacerbate existing tensions and create new ones. We, at IFAD, are working to address this by promoting inclusive and sustainable water management, which is crucial for reducing the potential for conflicts over water resources. This is even more relevant for small-scale producers, who are the backbone of our agricultural systems and are most affected by the water-related challenges.

- The gravity of these challenges becomes evident when we consider the statistics:
  - Over 60% of the global population faces varying degrees of water insecurity.
  - Agriculture, which is responsible for 70% of global freshwater withdrawals, also faces significant challenges in enhancing irrigation efficiency.
  - By 2030, drought may force some 700 million people from their homes.

- In light of these challenges, we will continue working to implement solutions. At IFAD, we are investing on optimizing water use, reducing water losses, and enhancing water efficiency in rural areas. These investments extend to various aspects of food production, from crop management to food processing. We also invest in enhancing the value chain, ensuring better access to water and food recycling strategies.
- We are advocates for the circular economy for water, promoting the safe reuse of wastewater to alleviate water scarcity, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and create sustainable sources of energy and nutrients.

- The nexus of water, food, energy, and climate change is fundamental to improving the resilience of our food systems. This nexus is further compounded by population growth, urbanization, and rising incomes, which lead to increased demand for food, energy, and water. Water is a key requirement for energy and food production.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- Let's continue working together, recognizing that our pursuit of water-resilient, food-secure, and inclusive and prosperous societies is the cornerstone of our missions.
- Let's continue working together so no one is left behind.

Thank you VM.