

## **Sixth GEF Assembly and Associated Meetings**

### **STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (IFAD)**

SDG 17 asks us to make a stronger commitment to building partnerships that support the Sustainable Development Goals. It demands that when we seek to develop solutions that will support the global environment and human development, we do so by building multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources. As we move into GEF7, with its ambitious agenda to transform the systems that support how we live, eat, move, produce and consume, we will need more than ever to leverage partnerships to succeed.

We know that global food production must increase by 60 per cent by 2050 if we are to meet the growing demand for food, and end poverty (SDG1) and hunger (SDG2). Without the sustainable management of biodiversity, water resources, oceans and land, we will not achieve these goals and we will risk undermining action on climate change (SDG13).

There are approximately 2.5 billion people living in rural areas, and they are among the poorest and hungriest people in the world, despite the majority working on small farms to provide food for their communities. It is therefore vitally important that as we support smallholder farmers to improve their livelihoods and food security, we also empower them to become custodians of land (SDG15), oceans (SDG 14), and water (SDG6).

The strategic partnership between IFAD and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) speaks to the heart of SDG 17's call for close cooperation and coordination for development. As an executing agency for GEF financing, IFAD has supported countries to access approximately USD258 million with an active portfolio of USD161 million of GEF resources and USD615 million of co-financing opportunities with IFAD, government and beneficiaries.

By working together, IFAD enables GEF financing to reach rural communities and fragile areas, addressing issues of land degradation, coastal management, biodiversity loss, climate change and social inclusion. Partnering with IFAD leverages knowledge that comes from forty years of experience financing projects in some of the poorest and most remote areas of the world. IFAD currently manages 27 projects that use GEF funding to support the SDGs.

Through partnership, IFAD and GEF leverage individual strengths to build innovative and transformative approaches to development to scale. For example, IFAD is leading the GEF6 Integrated Approach Programme (IAP), 'Fostering Sustainability and Resilience for Food Security in sub-Saharan Africa'.

Working together with seven partners, and building on their respective comparative advantages, the IAP taps USD116 million of GEF resources in support of twelve countries. This complements USD805 million in co-financing from IFAD, governments, our seven partners in the IAP, foundations and the private sector. In doing so, this programme shows how the GEF is a catalyst for greater coherence among many agencies as we work to transform ecological systems to enhance food security by building sustainable food

systems. This experience is directly relevant to the even greater aspirations for integrated programming in GEF7.

By building partnerships, IFAD and GEF are tackling some of the most pressing environmental concerns of our day. One such example from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is our joint efforts to combat peatland fires and haze pollution by fostering sustainable peatland management. The partnership has financed large scale programmes of work, particularly in Malaysia and Indonesia, and has created strategic partnerships with ASEAN, the European Union, GIZ, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the Global Environment Centre Foundation.

IFAD is at the forefront of gender equality in rural communities, and as such stands ready to support GEF's new Policy on Gender Equality adopted at the 53<sup>rd</sup> GEF Council in 2017. Efforts to tackle environmental degradation and those to address gender inequality can be mutually supportive, and are themselves an important element needed to achieve the SDGs.

As we move to the implementation of GEF7, IFAD continues to offer its support as a partner to the GEF and to countries to make the necessary systemic changes to address the most pressing environmental challenges faced by rural communities. We reaffirm our commitment to invest in mitigating and adapting to climate change and in preventing and reversing environmental degradation in all its forms.