

## Partnering on a Global Stage to Enhance Food Security and Food Systems in Africa

### *A discussion between the IFAD President and the Representatives of IFAD's Member States*

IFAD HQ, Rome, and online, 17 September 2024, 11:15 – 12:35

#### Overview

On 17 September 2024, IFAD, in collaboration with the Italian Presidency of the G7, convened a closed-door event titled “*Partnering on a Global*

*Stage to Enhance Food Security and Food Systems in Africa: A discussion between the IFAD President and the Representatives of IFAD's Member States*” at its headquarters in Rome. Moderated by the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), the dialogue brought together representatives from IFAD's Member States and other key stakeholders to discuss the critical role IFAD can play in advancing the G7 Apulia Food Systems Initiative (AFSI).<sup>1</sup>



#### Opening remarks and presentations

The event began with a welcome from the moderator, who introduced the interactive dialogue's goal: to explore IFAD's role in leveraging G7 investments to enhance food security and build resilient food systems, particularly in fragile contexts. The moderator emphasised IFAD's unique position as a financial institution dedicated to rural transformation.

**Alvaro Lario, President of IFAD**, emphasised IFAD's mandate and priorities in combating extreme poverty and hunger while addressing fragility and climate change through public and private sector investments. He congratulated the Italian Presidency of the G7 for putting finance for food systems and the climate-food nexus at the centre of the global debate and expressed pride in IFAD's existing engagement in some of the AFSI's initiatives (such as the Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils (VACS), and the Technical Cooperation Collaborative



(TCC)<sup>2</sup>. He then noted IFAD's partnership with the G7 and G20 Presidencies over time and highlighted ongoing initiatives such as G7's Germany CompensAction (an initiative to compensate local communities for their services to preserve natural resources) and Japan's 'Enhanced Linkages to the Private Sector' (ELPS) initiative. Lastly, he urged action to enable LDC fiscal space and foster risk mitigation in support of food security and rural transformation, including through Debt for Food Swaps.

<sup>1</sup> See [Apulia G7 Leaders' Communiqué](#).

<sup>2</sup> See Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils and Technical Cooperation Collaborative.

**Francesca Utili, Director General of International Financial Relations at Italy's Ministry of Economy and Finance**, praised IFAD's role in the global financial development architecture and underlined Italy's significant contribution to IFAD13. She emphasised Italy's commitment to addressing development challenges through enhanced partnerships and financial strategies and outlined the G7 finance track work that intersects with IFAD's mission. In her concluding remarks, Ms Utili highlighted the G7 Finance track efforts to develop a multidimensional country-focused approach, to reduce the risk of debt distress in low-income countries and vulnerable middle-income economies committed to progress towards achieving sustainable development goals. This approach seeks to strengthen existing tools and promote enhanced multilateral coordination.



**Stefano Gatti, Director General for International Development Cooperation and Chair of the G7 Development Track and Food Security Working Group**, discussed Italy's



development cooperation strategy and the Italian G7 Presidency's priorities. He noted Italy's substantial investment in food and nutrition security and food systems and highlighted the key deliverables of the AFSI initiatives, including: Debt for Food Swaps; a G7 Coalition of Public Development Banks; and Financing for Shock-Driven Food Crisis Facility. He then presented the G7 Initiative on a private-public fund for a sustainable and resilient global coffee value chain. Gatti stressed the role of IFAD and other RBAs in implementing these initiatives effectively.

Following the opening remarks, IFAD representatives outlined the institution's initiatives and potential contributions to the G7 AFSI. **Malek Sahli, Lead Development Finance Officer at IFAD**, highlighted the fiscal constraints faced by partner countries and IFAD's efforts to free up fiscal space for rural transformation through mechanisms like Debt for Development Swaps. **Juan Carlos Mendoza, Director of IFAD's Environment, Climate, Gender, and Social Inclusion Division**, described the main risks perceived in the rural space (information asymmetry, high transaction costs, lack of linkages of producers to markets; lack of appreciation of the economic value of the benefits generated by investments in agriculture). He then provided examples on how IFAD addresses those risks. He referred to the collaboration between IFAD and development finance institutions (DFIs) and public

development banks (PDBs) to foster climate-smart investments in Africa through the Agri PDBs Platform;<sup>3</sup>the CompensAction initiative to recognise rural communities' contribution to ecosystems; and the Platform for Agricultural Risk Management (PARM) to build resilience. Lastly, he introduced IFAD13 as a key vehicle to support coffee value chain resilience and address climate risks in African rural areas.

<sup>3</sup> See Agri-PDBs Platform.

### Open dialogue

After the remarks and presentations, the moderator opened the floor for an engaging Q&A session with the IFAD Member State representatives and other key stakeholders. The participants congratulated the Italian Government for AFSI and the global leadership on sustainable and resilient food systems. IFAD emerged as a key partner to G7, G20, and Governments from the Global South.

The **Chair of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)** – H.E. Ms Nosipho Jezile – noted that competing priorities and continued food insecurity in Africa undermine the continent's potential for economic growth despite the huge endowment in land, natural resources and peoples. Technical innovation for precision agriculture, investments to build rural resilience and climate adaptation are crucial. Anticipating the CFS 52 ECDP-IFAD joint side-event on the international financial architecture for food systems,<sup>4</sup> she called upon the importance of linking Washington to Rome through stronger collaboration between Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and the UN Rome-based Agencies (RBAs). She also stressed

the critical role the private and public sectors should play both in repurposing current financial flows and freeing the fiscal space for sustainable food system investments. Lastly, the Ambassador referred to the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI), adopted in 2014, as the polar star for investments in this space.

**Germany** also noted the importance of this event in reinforcing the finance-food-climate



nexus, congratulated Italy for their global leadership, and stressed IFAD's strong role in supporting national and regional PDBs and investing in climate resilience. He further noted the geographic proximity of the UN Rome-based Agencies to Africa and welcomed the Brazilian G20 Presidency's current focus on eradicating poverty and hunger. Lastly, he encouraged leveraging existing initiatives (such as the Global Alliance for Food Security (GAFS) to unlock and catalyse financial resources.

**Brazil** noted how the multidimensionality of poverty puts pressure on public budgets, reducing economic growth and tax revenues. To address this, investments in sustainable food systems, biodiversity and protection for smallholders and family farmers shall be prioritised. **CDP** then introduced the G7 PDBs and DFIs Collaborative on Sustainable Food



Systems, an initiative to foster the food-climate biodiversity nexus, including through blended finance mechanisms to attract private investments; grants for technical assistance and project preparation assistance; as well as co-investments and risk mitigation initiatives.

<sup>4</sup> The event, titled ‘The International Financial Architecture: improving collaboration and scale to bridge the funding gap for sustainable food systems and family farmers’ will take place at the FAO Headquarters and virtually on Monday, 21 October 2024 at 13:30 CET.

**Lesotho** noted the potential of his country and the importance of infrastructure (storage, renewable energy and technology in particular) for transformative agriculture. **Nigeria** called upon the G7, as part of the UN Security Council, and IFAD, as UN International Financial Institution (IFI) to call upon leaders to secure stability without which development is undermined. The Ambassador also encouraged Italy to consider supporting commodities such as cassava and cocoa beside coffee. Finally, **Niger**, on behalf of the African Group, expressed strong appreciation for Italy and IFAD’s leaderships in addressing food insecurity in Africa.



### Conclusion

The event highlighted the critical role of IFAD and the G7 in tackling food security challenges through innovative financing and strategic partnerships. It also paved the way for continued collaboration and impactful initiatives, leading up to the G7 Development Ministerial meeting in Pescara on 23-24 October.

### Annex 1: Agenda

Moderator: Dr San Bilal, Senior executive and associate director of ECDPM's sustainable economies and climate action cluster

<p>Opening (15') 11.15-11.30</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Alvaro Lario, President of IFAD</li> <li>· Ms Francesca Utili, Director General, International Financial Relations, Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance and Chair of the G7 Finance Track</li> <li>· Mr Stefano Gatti, Director General for International Development Cooperation, MFA and Chair of the G7 Development Track and Food Security Working Group</li> </ul>
<p>Presentations (25') 11.30-11.55</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Presentations by IFAD representatives outlining IFAD’s potential contributions related to three specific deliverables under the G7 AFSI. Namely: 1) Partnering to enable the fiscal space for rural transformation; 2) Partnering to de-risk investments in agriculture: Collaborative of G7 PDBs and DFIs; and 3) G7 Private-Public Initiative on Coffee Value Chains Resilience and Circularity</li> </ul>

Interactive discussion (35') 11.55-12.30	· Moderated Q&A with interventions from the floor (25') and reactions from the IFAD President and G7 Presidency
Conclusion 12.30 – 12.35 (5')	· Conclusion by the Moderator