

Statements by Satu Santala

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International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, I would like to express my gratitude to the Government of Fiji, the Pacific Community, and the Food and Agriculture Organization for organizing the 8th Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services meeting at such a crucial time. As you know, today we battle food insecurity and struggle to create resilience in the face of climate change and natural disasters.

In IFAD, we invest in rural people, empowering them to increase their food security, improve the nutrition of their families and increase their incomes. We help them build resilience, expand their businesses and take charge of their own development. For more than 40 years, we have been supporting projects that improve the lives of rural and small-scale farmers – people who have a vital role in improving food, nutrition, and water security.

Over the past few decades, IFAD has made a substantial investment in the Pacific region, resulting in significant impact on the ground.

Total investment by IFAD in the Pacific region amounts to US\$ 420 million, of which US\$ 130 million is financed through the Fund's programme of loans and grants. For every US\$1 invested by IFAD, more than US\$2 has been leveraged, making IFAD a strong mobilizer of partnership financing. As IFAD's membership grows in the region, expanding investments to meet demand has become a high priority.

Let me provide a couple examples of our work:

In Papua New Guinea, a public-private partnership project forged direct market linkages between farmers and agribusiness enterprises, as well as provided training in more efficient and sustainable production practices. Value of coffee and cocoa sales increased by 82 percent, resilience increased by 10 percent, dietary diversity increased by 6 percent, and food security increased by 33 percent.

In Solomon Islands, another value chain development project engaged cocoa and coconut producers, linking them with enterprises through agribusiness partnerships. In addition to the significant increase in crop production, the ability to recover from climate shocks increased by 28 per cent.

IFAD's projects also take into account empowering marginalized groups and addressing big challenges in the region, such as climate change.

IFAD has always placed a strong focus on engaging with civil society organizations including farmer organizations, indigenous peoples' organizations and other community-based organizations. This aligns with IFAD's people-centred approach to development.

Climate trends and hazards make ecosystems and communities vulnerable in the region, but the exact impacts vary widely from one place to another. IFAD's projects have therefore been designed and developed based on a thorough understanding of local conditions and diverse ecosystems. The climate risk analysis of each project area assesses both historical and projected climate trends to build resilience of both ecosystems and communities.

IFAD's newly developed Small Islands Developing States strategies (2022–2027) reflects the progress of its work in the region, and our ambition to accelerate an inclusive and sustainable rural transformation for Pacific island countries. IFAD's approach for small developing islands is designed to highlight the unique vulnerabilities and development challenges they face due to their size, remoteness, limited resource base, and exposure to climate and natural disasters. IFAD's implementation of the strategy will emphasize efficiency, effective partnerships, and accelerated impact.

Scaling up our work and our impact requires more investment where it is needed most.

Right now, small-scale farmers receive about 6 cents for every 1 dollar worth of food they produce, while as little as 4 cents of every 1 dollar of Overseas Development Aid goes to agriculture. But we need to know every 1 dollar we spend now on building rural resilience can save up to 10 dollars in humanitarian and emergency aid in the future.

Now is the time to change this. Now is the time to invest in rural people and small-scale farmers, so they can nourish people, while building stable and strong communities. IFAD has recently launched the 13th replenishment of its resources – this is our call to action and framework for response. Through this process, IFAD will advocate for small-scale farmers and increased investments in rural areas of small islands developing states.

Thank you