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Session: Advancing human well-being

Introduction

Advancing human well-being is at the heart of sustainable development and is about upholding human rights and eradicating deprivations across multiple dimensions, closing opportunity gaps and expanding capabilities – including those needed to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequences. It is also about safeguarding the natural environment on which everyone depends to ensure the well-being of current and future generations. However, we are falling short on improving all people's lives due to inequalities in opportunities; inadequate access to quality education; persistent gender inequality; unequal access to quality health care and exposure to disease, the consequences of which are laid bare by Covid-19; and insufficient resilience to recover from shocks. Many of the needed transformations to advance human well-being are demonstrably possible, but pathways forward during the decade of action require cooperation, collaboration and dialogue among multiple stakeholders, and employing many levers to ensure no one is left behind, including the most vulnerable.

Guiding questions

Please consider the 5 questions below and submit written responses totaling **2000 words or less.** (Though the average should be 500 words per question, it is fine to use more words on one question and fewer on another, to total 2000.) Please draw from your field of expertise and experience and be as concrete and tangible as possible. Please provide your responses in a Word document by **13 May** to astra.bonini@un.org.

1. ***Policies, actions and trade-offs:*** What are some **promising actions to support progress toward advancing sustainable, inclusive and just economies**? What policy measures contribute to human-centred growth and to promote access to **quality and productive employment for all?** How could these actions be designed to generate synergies between SDG 8 and other Goals and Targets? What are some of the possible **trade-offs** from these actions and how can they be mitigated (see example below)? What are the most critical interventions that will be needed in economic systems over the next 2 years, 5 years, 10 years? For example, **what key measures are necessary in both public and private sectors to promote decent work and social protection**, eliminate wage gaps and the unequal burdens of unpaid carework between women and men, and support the transition to a sustainable production and consumption systems and 'green' jobs? What are some concrete policy examples that have illustrated success and could be shared for good practices?

IFAD's Response

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development framework stresses the importance of issues including the need for inclusive globalization, decent work for all, and environmental sustainability. Against this backdrop, the rural economy holds considerable potential for advancing more inclusive and

sustainable development models as well as for the promotion of decent work for all provided the right policies are in place. In fact, 88 per cent of the world's extreme working poor currently live in rural areas[1], which are often characterized by a severe shortage of decent work that hinders the building of sustainable livelihoods. However, agriculture and rural development constitute highly complex systems that require long-term strategies involving cooperation between new actors, such as the trade community or the climate change community, to achieve joint action towards rural transformation.

These challenges must be dealt with in an integrated and systematic framework through investment, policy engagement, and governance that adopt differentiated, context-specific approaches to development in which all voices are heard – including those of the most marginalized populations-rural people, women, youth and smallholder farmers.

Decent work and youth inclusion will be the defining challenges in the coming decade alongside climate-change. Young people represent an asset and potential catalyst for growth and progress, but this potential requires channelling and empowerment, with their expertise and experiences shaping their own development opportunities. Development actors should challenge the notion of youth as a homogenous category and work to place it at the centre of the development agenda. For example, IFAD's 2019 Rural Development Report (RDR) highlights and gives examples of how working with youth can promote rural transformation through tapping into the "unprecedented, rapid, transformative wave of technology change (that) is sweeping the world". Failure to consider the issues facing youth, along with underinvesting in the rural economy, will result in young people's aspirations of rewarding careers and access to social services not being met, in turn leading to increased urbanisation and forced rural-out migration, and the eventual stagnation of rural areas. These outcomes would eventually threaten the achievement of many of the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Regarding indigenous peoples, the recognition of their cultural values, perspectives, livelihoods and coping strategies should be the aim of any dialogue with governments and the private sector. The value of their knowledge regarding food, livelihood systems, natural resources management and biodiversity conservation are key elements that should be incorporated into climate change policy at the national and international levels. In order to do so, effective participation of indigenous peoples, including indigenous women and youth, in the decision-making processes on rural development initiatives and poverty reduction that affect their lives and territories should be reinforced. At the national level, processes of policy engagement between indigenous peoples, governments and the UN system can result in their meaningful participation to support progress toward advancing sustainable, inclusive and just economies. Country-level policy dialogues supported by IFAD since 2015 have contributed to the inclusion of indigenous peoples' issues in policy instruments according to their needs and rights.

 The innovation of this process resides in direct financial support to indigenous peoples' organizations to enable them to effectively engage in policy dialogues. Successful results of this initiative include the launch of the National Action Plan of Indigenous Peoples in El Salvador by the Salvadorian President in December 2018, the development of guidelines for public policy on indigenous peoples in Paraguay and the adoption of an overall framework for action on indigenous peoples in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

[1] ILO: World Employment and Social Outlook 2016: Transforming jobs to end poverty (Geneva, 2016), https://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/weso/2016-transforming-jobs/WCMS_481534/lang--en/index.htm
ILO: Rural-urban labour statistics. Room Document 3, 20th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, Geneva, 10-19 October 2018), https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_636038.pdf

2. ***Leaving no-one behind:*** Which groups are especially likely to miss out on economic benefits and decent work? To what extent are women missing out compared to men? Which groups risk being left behind even further as a result of COVID 19? How can economic and employment opportunities be improved for both women and men and specific groups at the low end of the income distribution? What is the role of labour market institutions, such as collective bargaining and minimum wages, versus other policies to ensure a fair sharing of the fruits of progress? How can social protection systems play a stronger role in reducing inequalities in opportunities and outcomes? What long-term policy measures need to be put in place or strengthened to promote the economic resilience of the most marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, migrants, rural populations, older persons and LGBTQ peoples?

IFAD's Response

Youth are a particularly vulnerable group in labour markets around the world - with the global youth unemployment rate four times the adult rate[2] - and the specifics relating to young people living in rural areas are often not fully integrated into the analysis and policy debate. This will represent a significant opportunity cost if tailored pro-youth measures are not sufficiently mainstreamed into development interventions, as the innovative capacity of young people will be central to addressing a range of interrelated emerging challenges, i.e. poverty reduction, employment generation, climate change, and long-term food and nutrition security. The key findings of RDR 2019 underlined that an effective approach to rural youth policy and investment is the one that strikes the "right balance" between *creating broader rural opportunities* and *fostering youth-centred investments* (in the agrifood sector, digital technologies and climate change adaptation) that can specifically generate employment opportunities for young people.

Since the adoption of the Rural Youth Action Plan in 2019, IFAD is sharpening its focus on rural youth and has prioritized **youth-centric development** across all of its programmes and projects. The Fund set a target for 50 per cent of its loan portfolio to be youth-sensitive so that youth dimensions will be carefully analysed and assessed when designing projects, as well as placing youth at the fore of objectives, activities, and results frameworks. In promoting this youth-centric development, IFAD outlined a cross-sectoral approach with a view not only to increase decent job opportunities but also to promote the ***engagement of young people in operational processes*** at all levels and with special focus on investments in the countries.

Indigenous Peoples remain disproportionally affected by poverty compared to their non-indigenous counterparts and continue to face discrimination, exclusion and marginalization. Policies often fail to engage indigenous peoples by not considering holistic perceptions of well-being. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic is disproportionately affecting certain indigenous communities, shedding light on the underlying structural inequalities caused by historical and cultural factors. Over 73.4 per cent of the global indigenous population live in rural areas. Creating inclusive dialogue that considers intercultural approaches to policy, programmes and interventions, obtaining Free, Prior and Informed Consent of indigenous communities is key in order to enable their inclusion. In this regard, IFAD has taken a series of initiatives to establish a more systematic dialogue with indigenous communities through the indigenous peoples' Forum at IFAD. The Forum is a process of engagement with indigenous peoples that promotes accountability by encouraging indigenous peoples' representatives to provide feedback on IFAD-supported operations. Moreover, the process facilitates consultation with indigenous peoples' representatives on rural development and poverty reduction and promotes

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[2] Policy brief: a systemic approach to creating more and better jobs, (ILO).

the participation of indigenous peoples' organizations in IFAD-supported activities at the country, regional and international levels.

Over the past two decades, remittances have emerged as an important contribution to the well-being of migrant families and the development of communities of origin. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrants, remittance flows, and rural population during the first months of 2020 are causing an unprecedented global economic upheaval due to job losses and sharp reduction in economic activity. Among the most affected groups are at least the 200 million international migrant workers in the sending countries, and over 800 million family members back home, who rely on remittances for their livelihood.

In 2019, global remittances reached the estimated record amount of $554 billion. Almost half of these flows went to households in rural areas, who rely on these flows for their livelihood, support build resilience, and achieve their own SDGs. In 2020, according to the latest World Bank forecast, remittances worldwide are expected to decrease by 20 per cent. This translates into a drop of US$110 billion in available resources for the basics -- food, health, housing and educational expenses -- of millions of migrant families. In response to the UNSG's call for global solidarity in response to the coronavirus crisis, IFAD launched the Remittance Community Task Force (RCTF)[3]. Its objectives are to identify and develop key short-, medium- and long-term actionable solutions to address the current challenges produced by the covid-19 pandemic.

3. **Knowledge gaps:** What science, knowledge and data gaps need to be addressed for better understanding the interlinkages between SDG8 and SDG 1, 5, 10 and others in economic systems? How can these be addressed? What are the information gaps that need to be addressed to respond in an efficient and equitable way to the COVID 19 Crisis? What steps are being taken to mainstream disaggregated data, including on gender, into research and data production to address multiple and intersecting inequalities, and to improve the quality and comparability of available data across countries and time?

IFAD's Response
As highlighted by the key findings of the RDR 2019, the evidence base for determining what works in promoting rural youth development remains underdeveloped. Given the importance of the increasing numbers of youth at this juncture in the global dynamics of change, which include the demographic transition, the agrifood system transformation process, the digital revolution and climate change, this lack of evidence is posing particular challenges as most of the discourse on rural youth is not rooted in empirically substantiated facts. Rural young people, especially those who reside in the most isolated areas, are hard to capture in official figures. Since age-disaggregated data are required to monitor progress towards achieving the SDG targets, SDGs advocate for literature and an evidence base focused on youth in development (IFAD RDR 2019).

Cultures, worldviews, values, spiritualties, indigenous knowledge systems and customary governance systems – which include living in harmony with nature, reciprocity, inter-culturalism, peace and community solidarity – are key factors which have ensured the protection of the ecosystems and biodiversity in indigenous peoples' territories and indigenous peoples' livelihoods. The protection of and respect for indigenous peoples' rights to self-determination, culture, indigenous knowledge and indigenous governance systems will guarantee that indigenous peoples will be able to contribute to

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[3] The RCTF, launched on March 24th, is now collaborating on four action areas: 1) Remittance families: senders and recipients: 2) Private Sector's action; 3) Enabling environment to address current barriers; 4) Identify and promote digitalization.

making our world more sustainable, healthy and secure. A systematic recognition and the inclusion of culturally relevant approaches is essential to address intersecting inequalities of indigenous youth, women and indigenous people with disabilities. The establishment of platforms that seek to promote the exchange of information, analyses and operational coordination to generate and strengthen capacities, as well as dialogue with governments and international organizations, in order to promote appropriate responses is especially relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic.

4. ***Relevant means of implementation and the global partnership for development (SDG 17):*** Achieving the 2030 Agenda relies on applying the means of implementation to harness synergies and/or reduce trade-offs. Are there examples of how the various means of implementation, including finance, partnerships, capacity building, and science and technology (also see below), are being brought together to achieve these objectives at scale? scale? How can existing UN system partnerships more effectively support these objectives? Can these be replicated or adjusted to fit other contexts? What are the most important partnerships that will be needed over the next 2 years, 5 years, 10 years? What kinds of safeguards can be put in place in partnerships, for example, gender, human rights and environmental impact assessments? What are steps that can be taken by existing and new partnerships to promote the sustained participation of civil society organizations including women's and girls' organizations, youth-led organizations and national human rights institutions?

IFAD's Response

Adolescent girls, indigenous youth, and people with disabilities are among the most traditionally marginalized groups. Developing stronger operational partnerships with other development actors and key institutions that have strong comparative advantage on these issues and tailoring them more closely to country needs and circumstances will be pivotal in ensuring their right to participation and to pursue a course of inclusive development. For instance, the Global Youth Indigenous Caucus (GYIC) has put forth a set of recommendations for UN agencies through the *Rome Statement on the Contribution of Indigenous Youth towards a World Without Hunger*. Understanding how disability is related to poverty will make it possible to design effective programmes and policies that are capable of reaching disabled youth. In China, for example, IFAD has successfully developed a partnership with the Disabled Persons' Federation, with the objective of enhancing the skills of rural women and economically capable disabled persons for employment and income generation. Looking forward, IFAD will enhance its efforts for the identification and further development of partnerships with those organizations operating in this specific field, such as UNICEF, Save the Children, and Humanity & Inclusion. Likewise, partnering with UNFPA, Oxfam and Save the Children on issues related to adolescent girls and nutrition will strengthen global advocacy activities.

IFAD is currently defining and developing a new approach to strengthen youth (youth groups, organizations, networks, local youth champions, and opinion leaders) participation as key partners in field operations to increase youth-sensitivity of IFAD's investments and respond to the youth unemployment challenge. Key partners (such as ILO and PROCASUR) already expressed their interest to join IFAD in supporting this initiative. IFAD has also institutionalized dialogue with indigenous peoples and farmer organizations' representatives within the biennial Indigenous Peoples and Farmers' Fora and has collaborated with several other donors (EU, SDC, AFD) to strengthen the capacity of FOs and their regional networks to become more effective players in policy processes.

Moreover, innovative financing within a broader partnership framework can help SDG implementation where other types of finance do not provide sufficient funds. IFAD has developed innovative approaches to increase financial flows to developing countries and use available resources more effectively. Along with the European Union, the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States

(ACP), the Government of Luxembourg and the Alliance for the Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), IFAD launched a blended capital impact fund, the Agri-Business Capital (ABC) Fund, that invests in underserved segments of agribusiness value chains by providing loans and equity investments adapted to the needs of rural SMEs, farmers' organizations, agri-preneurs and rural financial institutions. It specifically targets SMEs that struggle to access capital and financial services, placing a particular focus on incubating enterprises led by young people. This innovative finance mechanism will help filling the "missing middle" financing gap and offer a one-stop shop of products for rural agro-entrepreneurs. Under the new private sector engagement strategy adopted in September 2019, IFAD can now directly fund private sector entities within a wider range of projects that increase poor rural peoples' productive capacities, improve their benefits from market participation, and promote the use of climate-smart practices. The private sector's involvement in the eradication of hunger and poverty has become even more important during the COVID-19 crisis to reduce some of its immediate impacts and plan for a longer-term recovery when it is over.

The involvement of indigenous peoples is key to achieving the ambitions of the SDGs. On the one hand, they hold valuable knowledge and traditions that provide solutions to major challenges, including those related to sustainable natural resource management, climate resilience, and promoting sustainable and resilient food systems that ensure we provide nutritious foods that avoid the triple burden of malnutrition and that are available, accessible and affordable to all. On the other hand, their exclusion and marginalization threatens the central tenet of the 2030 Agenda – to leave no one behind. Engagement with indigenous peoples must be informed by mechanisms to involve their organizations in decision-making processes and to ensure the principle of free, prior and informed consent is respected, as enshrined in international standards. IFAD has in place the Indigenous Peoples' Assistance Facility (IPAF), an effective instrument to bridge grassroots organizations with the indigenous peoples' regional and international movements. Overall, the knowledge generated from the implementation of the small projects financed through the IPAF promotes a dialogue between indigenous peoples' organizations and IFAD. Also, the partnership established by the IPAF has provided a concrete response to indigenous peoples' requests. Finally, based on the recommendations from the third global meeting of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD, the latest IPAF cycle has a focus on indigenous youth.

5. ***Science, technology and innovation:*** The ways we eat, live and work are defined to various extents by science, technology and innovation, and achieving sustainability in all these areas will require STI-based solutions, which are applied in an ethical manner and respect human rights. How can we create and scale up STI solutions to strengthen human well-being in sustainable ways, and to promote improved capabilities and build resilience?

IFAD's Response

IFAD considers science, technology and innovation critical to achieving sustainability and a key lever to advance its work and mission. IFAD envisions rural societies in which STI-enabled services and solutions significantly contribute to achieving food security and prosperity and leaving no one behind. The application of STI-based solutions should be guided by shared principles. In 2019 IFAD developed a ten-year (2020-2030) global ICT for Development (ICT4D) Strategy, aimed at leveraging on digital technologies to increase the organization's development impact and improve the economic and social conditions of rural people. IFAD identified the following key principles, among the others: (a) the Do no harm principle, to minimize the harm caused by interventions, and striving to mitigate any possible negative impacts of the use of digital technology; and the "Responsible Data" principles, in line with

the United Nations 'Principles on Data Protection and Privacy', and the 'Data Privacy, Ethics and Protection Guidance Note on Big Data for Achievement of the 2030 Agenda', approved by the United Nations Development Group.

STI-based solutions must be people-centric and development-driven. Successful initiatives in this area are built by considering the peoples' personal, social and economic needs as well as their skills and learning demands. The Principles for Digital Development offer a useful guidance to develop people-centric digital solutions. Based on IFAD's comparative advantage and cross cutting priorities (gender equality and women's empowerment, environment and climate, nutrition and youth), and building on its previous work in this area and experiences elsewhere, the organization has been promoting the use of digital technologies to improve rural women and men' access to information, services and financial inclusion, with the aim of increasing their agricultural productivity, expand their benefits from market participation, and strengthen their household resilience.

Partnerships are essential for the successful implementation of STI-based solutions. Finding complementarities in STI capacity and expertise among development partners has been critical for multiplying the impact of IFAD's work in a cost-effective manner. For partnerships to yield results, experience shows that it is important to: (i) have the interest and commitment of a critical mass of staff; (ii) explicitly include the sustainability and scalability of STI-based solutions in the partnership agreement; and (iii) secure support at the country level, including infrastructure and partner capacities.

> a. **What role will STI play in this transformation to a sustainable system of building human well-being? What are the most promising technological solutions? What are potential trade-offs and synergies to keep in mind in this context, including in terms of ensuring that technological applications, such as Artificial Intelligence, adhere to human rights and ethical standards**?

IFAD's Response
While digital technologies can be a strategic enabler of development, there are a variety of barriers preventing poor peoples' access to and participation in the Information Society. Not only do technologies and related infrastructures need to be available, but they must be affordable to smallholder farmers and rural people. In turn, rural household need to be aware of these technologies, and need to have the capacity to use them. For this reason, IFAD will be particularly focusing on the last mile to allow the participation of those who do not have access to internet connectivity, leveraging on proven solutions like SMS, Interactive Voice Systems, and radio.

Access to STI can increases everybody's ability join and develop virtual fora, communities and networks that respond to specific needs, interest and linguistic abilities. This can allow voice and networking capacity also to those segments of the society that traditionally did not have this possibility, in particular rural women and girls in remote areas, with restricted mobility, affected by social bias or inability to understand a language different than the local one. Internet and ICT open up opportunities for more equitable governance at local and national level, as well as women's inclusion in decision-making processes through the ability to network and lobby for their interest. Setting up a favorable policy environment and enabling measures is paramount to accrue these benefits.

It is important to recognize that there are no gender-responsive STI solutions by default. For the more, STI solutions tend to be designed and developed by disproportionately more men than women, which

often translates into an inherent bias that tend to exclude women even when not done explicitly. Gender-based issues to access and control of technologies required for benefitting from STI solution also need to be taken into account. IFAD has been linking excluded women to markets through the use of the most appropriate digital platforms, from simple social networking platforms such as Facebook ("f-commerce") to formalized e-commerce platforms that offer a range of integrated business services. These have offered new opportunities for women's economic benefit and inclusion, as well as promoted access to a range of financial services (e.g. payments, credit, financial literacy enhancement, transfers).

It is critical to establish foundational principles and governance tools to ensure that technological applications, such as Artificial Intelligence, adhere to human rights and ethical standards. These principles should link STI-solutions with the UN Core Values and human rights principles, and should serve to address bias, discrimination, and environment concerns. Ethical standards of maintaining data privacy and anonymity should be embedded in data-driven solutions. The promotion of multidisciplinary teams could be a good strategy to strengthen quality control and data curation.

> **b. How can STI help improve capabilities and build resilience, in both developing and developed countries?**

IFAD's Response
STI can play a key role for the transformation of to sustainable and equitable economic systems. Digital solutions can improve the use of natural resources in agricultural production, make distribution of agricultural products more efficient, promote sustainable consumption, encourage the recycling of agricultural by-products and the improve waste management. STI can also play a key role in ensuring that their voices are heard when developing policies, programmes and regulations – potentially allowing participation in these decision-making processes of the most excluded/remote ones.

Knowledge sharing is key to foster the increased uptake and promotion of appropriate STI solutions across development organizations. With limited resources, internal capacity can be developed by internal champions who promote information sharing. The work of IFAD's GeoSpatial group has been instrumental to lead to greater impact and amplify the benefits of IFAD's partnerships with technology providers and UN agencies (including with organizations such as the European Space Agency and the World Food Programme, WFP).

Remote and in-situ sensors are extremely powerful for identifying and monitoring the impact of agricultural systems, spot vulnerabilities to climate change monitoring biodiversity, supporting the conservation and growth of agrobiodiversity, increase the efficiency of agricultural production, minimize the use of water and pollution, support the optimal dosage of nutrient inputs on crop fields, and enabling the development of policy actions such as the compensation for carbon sequestration and the payment of environmental services.

The IFAD-WFP Weather Risk Management Facility partnership, of the Platform for Agricultural Risk Management (PARM), supported the adoption of index insurance based on remote sensing technology by 69 farmers' organizations and unions in Senegal, and it is expanding such use across projects in Zambia, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Uganda, and Kenya.

IFAD-supported Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP) enhanced stakeholder access to high quality data and diagnostic evidence on ecosystem health and household resilience, as well as the capacity to use such data and evidence to strengthen the design, monitoring, and ongoing refinement of programme interventions and investments.

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How can (homegrown) community innovations be leveraged and shared to inspire and accelerate local creative solutions and action?

<u>**IFAD's Response**</u>

To be successful, STI-based solutions must be people-centric. Successful initiatives in this area considered beneficiaries' personal, social and economic needs as well as their skills and learning demands. IFAD is very actively engaged in geospatial technologies, having leveraged them across more than a hundred countries. These solutions have helped targeting areas and communities according to their needs and vulnerabilities, improving social vulnerability assessments, reducing biases in project design, improving the monitoring and evaluation of development initiatives.

Development organizations need to strengthen their accountability for mainstreaming issues like privacy, ethics and inclusiveness in the interventions leveraging on STI-based solutions, particularly when working with vulnerable and marginalized populations. Decision Support Systems, more frequently building on data science and Artificial Intelligence, can improve short-term and long-term decision-making, optimizing agricultural production, logistics, minimizing the consumption of resources, detecting inefficiencies and acting upon them.

Social networks and mobile applications, such as FoodCloud and Too Good To Go, can help connecting retailers with consumers and non-governmental organizations to get access to food that would be wasted for free or at discounted prices. Digital Ledger Technologies, such as blockchain, can allow the multi-dimensional mapping of supply chains, allowing to make them more efficient and facilitating fraud detection and food safety. Such technologies can also support financial inclusion, thanks to the creation of unique financial identities, and increase the transparency in access to land titles.

Fintech solutions can boost financial inclusions, increasing the access to financial services and facilitating the flow of remittances. IFAD will build on strategic partnerships with Mobile Network Operators to promote financial inclusion, expanding the work carried out in Asia (e.g. with ValYou in Malaysia) and Africa (e.g. with Orange, MTN, and Africell in Senegal, Ghana and Gambia) to facilitate the transfer of remittances through digital channels and mobile-based technologies.