

Statement by  
Michel Mordasini  
Vice President

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

General Assembly roundtable on:  
*"International action and cooperation on refugees and migrants and  
issues related to displacement: the way ahead"*

**New York**  
**19 September 2016**

Excellencies,

Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. We are meeting at a time when the fate of millions of migrants, refugees and forcibly displaced persons has seized the attention of the world. In 2015, forced displacement affected 65 million people. This is a crisis on a massive scale, affecting the whole world.
2. Mass movements of people have many causes. Among them are conflict, fragility, weak institutions, food insecurity, unemployment (particularly for youth), and competition over natural resources. From this reality, I would like highlight three messages.
3. First, many of those who migrate in search of security and better livelihood come from rural areas, and nearly all refugee camps and informal settlements of migrants and displaced persons in developing countries are also located in rural areas. There are profound rural dimensions to both extreme poverty, food insecurity and mass migration. These rural dimensions cannot remain underappreciated in global policy debates; they must be given greater recognition if the international community is to succeed in addressing the drivers of extreme poverty and worldwide displacement, and in working toward sustainable long-term solutions.
4. Second, the current situation reminds us that humanitarian relief and development are not separate, or separable, agendas. Two-thirds of displaced persons relocate within their own country, and in 2015, 86% of the 21 million refugees worldwide live in developing countries. While humanitarian organizations provide life-saving support that is key to help people affected by the migration crisis, more investments targeted to the hosting communities, mostly rural communities, are absolutely essential. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is already actively contributing to that effort and is pleased to announce the launch today of a new 100 million-US dollar Facility for Refugees, Migrants, Forced Displacement and Rural Stability (FARMS) to scale-up the vital work in this area.
5. Third, it will not be possible to reach the Sustainable Development Goals or to address the major drivers of forced displacement, unless we more consistently address the needs of rural people and communities in developing countries. Three-quarters of the world's poorest and hungriest people live in rural areas. The 2030 Agenda

reflects the central role of agriculture and rural development, not only in eliminating hunger and poverty, but also creating sustainable and inclusive societies and economies in the future. Investing in smallholder farmers and rural people is a major requirement to achieve the SDGs. These are also investments that intersect directly with some of the principal underlying causes of migration and forced displacement.

6. Indeed, rural investment can improve the lives of migrants and displaced people. Investing in agriculture, the mainstay of the rural economy, will enable host communities to better provide opportunities for migrants to live, work, and contribute to local development. Similarly, instituting efficient and reliable remittance channels can facilitate the transmission of US\$200 billion to rural areas back home. Efforts such as these serve both long-term development and humanitarian goals.
7. IFAD is proud that its 176 member states unanimously adopted a resolution to recognize June 16 as the International Day of Family Remittances and the contribution of migrants to the development of their communities of origin. We hope to welcome you all to the celebration next year, here in the UN in New York in conjunction with the fifth edition of the Global Forum on Remittances for Development.

Thank you.