On the occasion of International Women’s Day it is my pleasure to draw our collective attention to the central importance of gender equity and the empowerment of rural women in achieving IFAD’s goals.

For IFAD field operations, eliminating gender inequalities and increasing the capabilities of poor rural women are more than a matter of social justice. They are essential conditions for reducing poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition. In recent years we have made significant advancements in addressing gender concerns at programme level. But to have a greater and more sustainable impact on poverty, we need to do more, to be more systematic in design, to pay more attention to implementation and to monitor progress.

In IFAD, we are committed to taking active measures to ensure an environment of equality and fairness for both women and men, and to support all employees in the workplace and in balancing the demands of work and home. Greater gender equality in staffing will be a measure of progress.

I wish to acknowledge the dedication of IFAD staff – women and men – who are actively engaged in efforts to ensure gender equity within the organisation, and in addressing gender concerns in our field operations.

Lennart Båge