



Kanayo F. Nwanze
President

I would like to congratulate Dr. R.S. Paroda, Prof. M.S. Swaminathan and other organizers of the 1st International Agrobiodiversity Congress (IAC 2016) for this important initiative. The theme of “Science, Technology, Policy and Partnership” goes to the heart of the need for a concerted global effort by all stakeholders to end poverty and hunger while preserving the planet’s natural resources, thereby ensuring a sustainable future.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is a unique organization, both an international financial institution and a United Nations agency. It is the only development institution exclusively devoted to eradicating poverty and hunger in rural areas. It does so by investing in rural people. IFAD finances agricultural and rural development projects that help rural people grow more food, increase their incomes, gain access to markets and financial and other resources, and direct their own development. Rural people make up three-quarters of the world’s hungry and poorest people, and are also on the cutting edge of climate change.

Rural people are also stewards of much of the world’s natural resources. Therefore, they are key partners in preserving agrobiodiversity. Rural people—including indigenous communities—can make valuable contributions thanks to their traditional knowledge and their understanding of ecosystem management. IFAD’s Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP) is the largest global financing source dedicated to supporting the adaptation of poor smallholder farmers to climate change. In channeling climate finance to rural peoples, ASAP also supports local agrobiodiversity promotion and diversification as a means to adapt to climate change.

A key aspect of sustainable development will be to scale up grassroots-level innovations to conserve, manage and appropriately use agrobiodiversity, including crops, animals, poultry, fish and other agriculturally important biota in the richly diverse rural areas of developing countries. I am happy that the agenda of the Congress will cover these and other important issues, and will provide an opportunity for participants to share knowledge and experiences that contribute to sustainable rural development. I wish the congress every the success.

MESSAGE

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