

Iceland: Statement

177th Session of the FAO Council 7-11 April 2025

Item #4 Medium Term Plan 2026-29 and Programme of Work and Budget 2026-27

Thank you Chair

Iceland aligns with the EU statement as well as the statement of the Nordic countries and wishes to add the following to draw attention to a specific, cross-cutting theme of the Strategic Framework - Gender Equality.

1. By reducing inequalities, we create preconditions for inclusive economic growth. Hence, the promotion of equal rights to education, access to economic resources and basic services, ownership and control over land and property, inheritance, and natural resources are not only a matter of social and political justice, but also make sense from an economic perspective.
2. Mr. Chair, it appears from the MTP and PWB that FAO's efforts to further Gender Equality are underfunded, with an anticipated funding gap of nearly 40m USD. [sjá bls. 187, BL1].
3. In the current reality of budget constraints across the UN system it is imperative to ensure that those, already at a disadvantage, be it economically or socially, are spared to the extent possible.
4. Quoting the UN Secretary General: "Budgets at the United Nations are not just numbers on a balance sheet they are a matter of life and death for millions around the world."
5. Let us be mindful therefore that, whilst harsh fiscal realities leave us with nothing but difficult choices, it is imperative that decisions on where and how to prioritise appropriations are meticulously prepared.
6. FAO is implementing important programmes in support of national efforts to empower women and girls and support gender-responsive policy making, such as the Commit to Grow Equality initiative and the CFS' Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition both aiming to improve equitability across agrifood systems, including in the fisheries and aquaculture value chain.
7. Such programmes are key to improving food security.
8. Iceland commends the good and progressive work already being done by FAO in this area.
9. While we do not insist FAO do more with less, we encourage a strict prioritizing of FAOs resources.

Thank you Chair