Creating collaborative and creative networks to highlight the progress and challenges facing rural and indigenous women on their path towards full autonomy.
The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UN Women, the Central American Agricultural Council of the Central American Integration System (CAC/SICA), Mercosur’s Specialized Meeting on Family Farming (REAF), Brazil’s Special Secretariat for Family Farming and Agricultural Development (SEAD), as well as Uruguay’s General Directorate of Rural Development in the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (DGDR/MGAP), are the organizing entities of the campaign #RuralWomen, women with rights.

In 2018, as part of this collaborative initiative, these entities will join efforts, create networks and identify challenges, while sharing experiences and knowledge about the empowerment and full autonomy of rural, indigenous and Afro-descendant women in Latin America and the Caribbean.
1. Context

Gender inequality is one of the structural causes of rural poverty and one of the greatest challenges that countries of Latin America and the Caribbean must face to unleash the potential of rural development.

Although rural women have a significant participation in local economies, their work is often overlooked in national agricultural censuses and surveys, as well as in their own communities.

In addition, women are burdened with a double workload, as they are often responsible for unpaid work such as educating children, caring for small children and the elderly, preparing food or collecting water and firewood.

Rural women also have lower access to productive resources and services such as land, water, credit and training. In the case of indigenous women and rural Afro-descendants, the situation is particularly unfair.

According to FAO estimates (2011), if women in rural areas had the same access as men to land, technology, financial services, education and markets, agricultural production could be increased and the number of hungry people in the world reduced by between 100 million and 150 million.

However, one of the main problems in this regard is the lack of autonomy of most rural women: lack of physical autonomy makes them vulnerable to violence; lack of economic autonomy reduces their access to land, productive resources and training that would allow them to earn an income; and, lack of political autonomy means they are unable to participate in making decisions that affect their lives and communities.

To reverse this situation and accelerate progress towards sustainable rural development, countries of the region must take comprehensive actions aimed at achieving the empowerment and full autonomy of all women.

In this regard, in early 2018, the 62nd session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62) defined as a priority theme the "Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls".

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Considering this situation, FAO, CAC/SICA, UN Women, Mercosur’s REAF, Brazil’s SEAD, and Uruguay’s DGDR-MGAP, have launched the **Regional campaign for the full autonomy of rural and indigenous women of Latin America and the Caribbean.**
2. About the campaign

#RuralWomen, women with rights is based on the recommendations of the XIII Regional Conference on Rural Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Sustainable Development Goals¹, and the experiences of national campaigns held in Brazil and Argentina in 2015, as well as regional campaigns in 2016 and 2017².

The 2018 version of the campaign runs from March to December, promoting actions on social networks (online) and in rural territories and spaces for policy dialogue (offline).

The online component of the campaign will facilitate the sharing of achievements, challenges and priorities of governments, civil society, academia and the private sector, regarding the current situation of rural, indigenous and Afro-descendant women.

It will also help to create collaborative networks and give women themselves a voice. In addition, in line with the campaign’s open-source approach, any initiative related to the empowerment of rural women can join and create their own content and materials according to their local contexts.

The campaign will also seek to create effective mechanisms for the participation of rural women and their organizations at the territorial level, as well as in national discussion forums and international spaces for policy dialogue.

² The 2016 Campaign was organized by the Family Farming Knowledge Platform of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Uruguay’s National Institute for Women in the Ministry of Social Development (MIDES), Uruguay’s General Directorate for Rural Development in the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, Mercosur’s Specialized Meeting on Family Farming (REAF), Brazil’s Special Secretariat for Family Farming and Agrarian Development (SEAD) in the Ministry of Agrarian Development, and Argentina’s National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA) and Unit for Rural Change (UCAR), both part of the Ministry of Agribusiness.

More recently, the 2017 Campaign was implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Mercosur’s Specialized Meeting on Family Farming (REAF), Brazil’s Special Secretariat for Family Farming and Agricultural Development (SEAD), and Argentina’s Unit for Rural Change (UCAR).
Through its **offline component**, the campaign will seek to support instances of political advocacy so that the countries of the region prioritize gender equality as an important element in their strategies for sustainable rural development.
3. Priority areas

In line with the working agendas of the campaign’s organizing entities, four priority areas have been established for the mobilization of information and the formation of action networks:

a. Importance of rural, indigenous and Afro-descendant women in the sustainable production of sufficient, healthy and nutritious food.

b. Access of rural, indigenous and Afro-descendant women to productive resources and innovation systems.

c. Empowerment of rural, indigenous and Afro-descendant women.

d. Elimination of gender violence in rural areas.

To promote empowerment actions for indigenous women, the organizers formed an alliance with the global campaign *Indigenous Women: Make them visible, empower them*, an initiative promoted by FAO, the International Forum of Indigenous Women (FIMI), and the News Agency of Indigenous and Afro-descendant Women (NOTIMIA).

Synergies between the campaigns will help the organizers to combine efforts and promote the empowerment of women through joint initiatives with indigenous women leaders.

With regards to the elimination of gender violence in rural areas, given the experience of Uruguay and Brazil in this area, DGDR/MGAP and SEAD, respectively, will focus on this issue, with technical support from UN Women.
4. Implementation

1. Social media campaign
   - A unique hashtag will be used by the campaign, which may be accompanied by logos of the organizing entities, depending on the nature of the materials and the space or event where they are to be disseminated.

   - The hashtag can also be used by those interested in producing their own materials or adapting existing content as part of the campaign. The conditions for its use are available in the campaign’s guidelines.

   - The campaign also has a unique hashtag for indigenous women, which will help raise awareness, together with the global campaign for indigenous women.

2. Collaborative work
   - The organizing entities will promote the campaign through their digital channels, press offices, newsletters and corporate emails.

   - The organizing entities may also invite other institutions, organizations and individuals to join the campaign through their own networks at the local, national and regional levels.

   - The FAO national offices will support the offline component of the campaign at the territorial level, together with their local counterparts in the areas of gender equality and rural development.

   - Any person or agency interested in joining the campaign can do so by referring to the campaign’s guidelines and registering at the following link. For other types of collaboration, please contact: Mujeres-Rurales@fao.org
3. Information and content management

- Priority will be given to gathering information about the priority areas and disseminating research on progress, weaknesses and opportunities in the region.

- This will be managed through the database on rural women and indigenous peoples that is part of FAO’s Family Farming Knowledge Platform (PCAF).

- Countries can prioritize the campaign areas according to their national challenges and/or the priorities of local organizations related to gender equality and rural development.

- The contributions of the organizers and institutions involved in the campaign can be categorized as:
  > Studies and/or publications related to the selected topics in terms of gender equality.
  > Experiences and actions promoted, supported and/or financed by participating institutions/organizations that strengthen the role of rural women as producers or strategic agents in the territories.
  > Cases of public policies that promote and ensure gender equity of rural, indigenous and Afro-descendent women in regards to the priority issues.

The information provided by the participating organizations and institutions will also be available on the campaign website, where news about this joint initiative will be made available. The content will include links to other related websites.

In addition, all campaign materials will be available at the following link: bit.ly/2018MujeresRurales
6. Social media highlights

**APR-AUG**: Building partnerships
Interactive tool to raise awareness and contact organizations of rural women and related initiatives in the countries of the region.

**SEP-DEC**: Voices of rural and indigenous women
Systematization of information and testimonies from the preceding months of activism.

**MAR-DEC**: Dissemination of information and content on social media

**March 8**
International Women’s Day
Launch of the XXXV FAO Regional Conference.

**October 15**
International Day of Rural Women

**November 25**
International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

Contact: Mujeres-Rurales@fao.org