Empowering rural women to achieve food security and nutrition

22 November 2016
9.00-12.00
FAO Headquarters - Rome
Iran Room (B116)
The landmark General recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was adopted on 4 March 2016.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Convention) and GR34 provide strategic and practical guidance to States, the United Nations system and other development partners on States’ obligations for enhancing rural women’s empowerment at policy and programme levels for sustainable rural development and improved food security and nutrition. These obligations are closely related to the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals through advancing gender equality.

The CEDAW Convention sets normative standards on rural women’s equal access to food, education, health, non-discrimination, employment and political participation that are linked and support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular SDG 5 on “Gender Equality - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”. The Convention and GR34 recognize the significant contributions rural women make in reducing poverty, hunger and malnutrition and in promoting social and economic development.

Attention to the role of rural women in agriculture, food security and nutrition is critical, considering that food insecurity and inadequate nutrition are exacerbated by gender inequalities. This is despite women’s major contribution to agricultural production and rural development and the key role they play in household food security and nutrition. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty as a result of their limited access to key productive resources and opportunities as well as nutritious food. Women’s contributions to food security too often remain invisible and undervalued, and therefore not adequately reflected in policy, legal and institutional frameworks. Inequalities impose high costs on the agriculture sector and the food system and prevent the achievement of food security and nutrition objectives.

The purpose of the event is to discuss how CEDAW and GR34 can promote gender equality in agriculture and rural development and serve as a basis to guide international and national efforts towards the achievement of the sustainable development goals on gender equality, poverty reduction and food security and nutrition.

The event, organized jointly by FAO, IFAD, WFP, UN Women and OHCHR, will also provide a platform for representatives of the Governments of Guatemala and Botswana to share their experiences with CEDAW implementation. Finally, the event will discuss the role of the United Nations and civil society in facilitating the integration of gender equality and women’s empowerment issues into policies, legislation and investment strategies to close the gender gap and combat hunger.