

Summary of the

# FAO POLICY

# ON GENDER EQUALITY

Attaining Food Security Goals

in Agriculture and Rural Development

Gender equality is central to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations' (FAO's) mandate to achieve food security for all by raising levels of nutrition, improving agricultural productivity and natural resource management, and improving the lives of rural populations. FAO can achieve its goals only if it simultaneously works towards gender equality and supports women's diverse roles in agriculture and rural development. Gender equality is not only an essential means by which FAO can achieve its mandate, it is also a basic human right.



## BACKGROUND

The purpose of the FAO Policy on Gender Equality is to provide FAO with a framework for guiding its efforts to achieve gender equality in all its technical work, and for assessing results; it calls on the whole Organization to contribute to these efforts. It was developed in alignment with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and in response to the performance and reporting standards for UN entities required by the UN System-wide Action Plan (SWAP) for the implementation of the United Nations CEB Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

The policy specifies FAO's goal and objectives related to gender equality and delineates an accountability structure for ensuring policy oversight and achievement of results. A separate human resource action plan addressing gender parity issues within FAO has been developed for 2010-13, and a gender policy for human resources is planned for the longer term.

## RATIONALE/ KEY FACTS

- 45 percent of the world's population depends on agriculture, forestry, fishing or livestock production for its livelihood.
- Worldwide, women represent 43 per cent of the agricultural labour force, producing a large portion of the world's food crops.
- Households rely on women to cover a wide range of roles not only within the family as caregivers, but also as farmers and food producers all along the agricultural value chain.
- Women face overt and implicit discrimination in access to productive resources such as land and to services such as credit and extension.
- Women face wage discrimination in rural labour markets and are more likely than men to be in part-time, seasonal and/or low-paying jobs.
- The "gender gap", meaning women's disadvantage in access to resources and services compared to men, reduces women's productivity and diminishes their contributions to the agriculture sector. The gender gap affects the well-being of women and their families and imposes a high cost on the economy through productivity losses. Closing the gap could lift many people out of poverty and hunger.

## GENDER EQUALITY GOAL

The goal of FAO's Policy on Gender Equality is to achieve equality between women and men in sustainable agricultural production and rural development for the elimination of hunger and poverty.

Progress towards reaching this goal will result from:

1. reducing the gap between rural women and men in access to productive resources and services;
2. ensuring that women and men have the ability to influence programme and policy decision-making and building institutional responsiveness and accountability (voice); and
3. ensuring that rural women and men can take up economic opportunities to improve their individual and household well-being (agency).

## GENDER EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

The following objectives will guide FAO's work in advancing equality of voice, agency and access to resources and services between women and men. FAO will work with countries (with whom the major responsibility for achieving the goal and objectives lays), other UN agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs) and bilateral and private sector partners to make progress towards achieving these objectives by 2025:

1. Women participate equally with men as decision-makers in rural institutions and in shaping laws, policies and programmes.
2. Women and men have equal access to and control over decent employment and income, land and other productive resources.
3. Women and men have equal access to goods and services for agricultural development, and to markets.
4. Women's work burden is reduced by 20 percent through improved technologies, services and infrastructure.
5. The share of total agricultural aid committed to projects related to women and gender equality is increased to 30 percent.

## IMPLEMENTATION

FAO will work in two main ways to achieve its gender equality objectives and will implement a set of minimum standards for ensuring gender mainstreaming in all its work and for targeted interventions. It will also institute a series of institutional mechanisms and processes.

### 1. FAO will adopt gender mainstreaming in all its work

This means that all FAO work will systematically examine and address women's as well as men's needs, priorities and experiences as part of the development of policies, normative standards, programmes, projects and knowledge building activities, so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.

#### *Minimum Standards for Gender Mainstreaming (by 2015)*

To ensure that FAO systematically addresses the gender equality dimensions relevant to its normative work and country level programs and projects, it will put in place the following standards for gender mainstreaming:

1. All major FAO statistical databases incorporate sex-disaggregated data where relevant and available.
2. FAO invests in strengthening member countries' capacity to develop, analyse and use sex-disaggregated data in policy analysis and programme and project planning and evaluation. In particular, technical support to in-country data collection activities, such as agricultural censuses and surveys, will promote the mainstreaming of gender issues.
3. For all strategic objectives, a gender analysis is carried out and a gender action plan developed; progress on gender equality is measured for all corporate outcomes.
4. A financial target for resource allocation to the FAO Policy on Gender Equality is set and met.
5. A country gender assessment is undertaken as part of country programming.
6. A gender equality stock-taking exercise is conducted for all services, to provide a basis for better implementation of gender mainstreaming, including progress and performance measurement.
7. Gender analysis is incorporated in the formulation of all field programmes and projects, and gender-related issues are taken into account in project approval and implementation processes.
8. All programme reviews and evaluations fully integrate gender analysis, and report on gender-related impacts in the areas they are reviewing.
9. A mandatory gender equality capacity development programme is developed and implemented for all professional staff and managers.
10. Minimum competencies in gender analysis are specified, and all managers and professional staff are required to meet them.
11. Each technical department establishes a gender equality screening process for all normative work, programmes and knowledge products.
12. An assessment of the contribution to achieving FAO's gender equality objectives is included in the Performance Evaluation and Management Systems (PEMS) of all professional staff.
13. Human and financial resources and normative and operational results related to gender equality from the HQ to the country level are systematically tracked and reported to FAO governing bodies and to the UN system.

### 2. FAO will carry out programmes and projects that specifically target women

There are times when the gender gap is so large that women have no access to available opportunities. In those cases, specific attention needs to be drawn to them.

#### *Minimum Standards for Women-Specific targeted interventions (by 2017)*

1. 30 percent of FAO's operational work and budget at the country and regional levels is allocated to women-specific targeted interventions. Priority will be given to supporting organizations and activities that advance women's access to nutritious food and women's access to and control over land and other productive resources; strengthening rural women's organizations and networks; increasing women's participation and leadership in rural institutions; incorporating women's knowledge of agriculture into programmes and projects; and ensuring the development of technologies and services that reduce women's work burden.
2. The share of the Technical Cooperation Programme's total portfolio allocated to programmes and projects related to gender equality is increased from 9 to 30 percent.

## INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND OVERSIGHT

To ensure that gender mainstreaming and women-specific targeted interventions are fully implemented, the policy outlines detailed institutional mechanisms and processes that should be attained by 2015. These involve the creation of an inter-departmental Steering Committee to guide and oversee overall progress, headed by an ADG and who will report to the DG; development of a clear internal accountability structure; development of staff capacity on gender equality; gender sensitive communication and partnership building; establishment of knowledge building systems and gender sensitive monitoring and reporting, evaluation and audit.

For the full policy, visit FAO's website at [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)



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