

ACCELERATING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR RURAL WOMEN

Consultative workshop to launch a joint IFAD, FAO, WFP and UN Women programme in Niger

Women play a major role in developing rural areas and national economies. However, they only have limited access to resources for production, such as land, agricultural inputs, financial services and credit, extension services and technologies, a factor that creates an obstacle to an effective agriculture sector.

Against this background, the three Rome-based agencies – FAO, IFAD and WFP – decided to team up with UN Women to offer a more global and integrated United Nations response by supporting economic empowerment for rural women through joint action. The five-year programme will be implemented in seven countries: Niger, Ethiopia, Liberia, Rwanda, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan and Nepal. Its aim is to create synergies arising from the mandates and comparative advantages of each of the agencies, and to improve livelihoods and strengthen the rights of rural women, in the context of sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals after 2015 (post-MDG 2015).

The launch of a joint programme in Niger

A consultative workshop for the joint programme in Niger took place in Niamey from 27 to 28 November 2012. This launch workshop was organized together with all stakeholders – Representatives of the Ministries of Agriculture, Population, Promotion of Women and Child Protection and the 3N Initiative (Nigeriens feed Nigeriens), representatives of technical and funding partners (donors and international NGOs) and representatives of grassroots organizations already working with the four agencies, coming mainly from the two targeted regions of Maradi and Dosso.

Challenges and good practices

The workshop methodology was participatory and alternated presentation sessions with open discussions, working groups and plenary feedback sessions.

Following the working groups and during the plenary sessions, participants identified five main categories of requirements and challenges: capacity building, rights, access to information and resources, participation and

representation of rural women at all levels, and programme management (capacities and good governance).

Good practices already in place in Niger held special attention: the FAO-Dimitra listeners' clubs, CARE's Matu Masu Dubara microfinance programme, the UNFPA husbands' schools, CTB's project for Increasing Women's Financial Income in Dosso, and the capitalisation of good practices and gender mainstreaming in FAO's community development programmes.

The next steps

The four agencies are now mapping their project and programme activities in the two target regions and developing a common concept note for Niger.

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