

**RECOMMENDATIONS of the International Workshop “RURAL WOMEN AND LAND”
organised by the Rural Women National Network of Senegal
with the support of FAO-Dimitra and Enda-Pronat**

The international workshop “Rural women and land” was held in Thies, Senegal from 25–27 February 2003. The objective was to examine the problems encountered by women in regard to their access to land and natural resources.

During the meeting:

1. An inventory was made of the women’s experiences and initiatives.
2. The experiences and initiatives of participants were highlighted through exchange
3. Rural women and their activities were made visible.
4. The partners, religious and traditional leaders, as well as political decision makers were able to hear about the realities of rural women’s lives: the weight of tradition and strength of religion, which reject equality between men and women, despite the existing laws against discrimination.

Organised for and by rural women, the workshop was officially opened by the Honorable Awa Gueye Kebe, Minister for the Family and National Solidarity. The participants were from various origins with diverse professions: rural women and men from the different regions of the country, and other African countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Tunisia) members of the grassroots organisations who are members of the Dimitra Network, the FAO Representative for Senegal, women and men members of international and national organisations, NGOs (FAO, Dimitra Coordination, Belgian and Swiss Technical Cooperations, UNIFEM, ENDA-TIERS Monde, Union of Women Members of Parliament of Senegal) men and women of the media (written and spoken), private media, community-based media (rural radio), women and men in charge of decentralised State technical services, or representatives from technical Ministries who are interested in the issue, researchers, artists involved in the fight for the promotion of women and gender equality. The results were exceptional and the workshop objectives reached within a very lively and working atmosphere.

On the third day of the workshop, at the end of the Plenary session, each working group presented its results from which the **recommendations** were formulated:

To the Rural Women:

- To report the results of the workshop to the various grassroots organisations.
- To develop information strategies through the use of rural radio and through the participants themselves.
- To develop inter-group exchanges of experience between the countries in the region, by creating networks and by making links, twinning etc. through the Dimitra Network.
- To capitalise on the work achieved and on the activities undertaken by disseminating them in a reader-friendly way in the local newspapers, recording them on audiocassettes and videocassettes, and through informal talks or discussions.

To the Executive Board and the Network Support Unit:

- To put the report of the workshop at the disposal of all participants. Also, to disseminate it without delay to the various ministries interested in the issue, to support providing services to the rural world and women, embassies, financial partners, to the union of women parliamentarians and finally, to all actors involved in the land issue.

- To make sure that the report (at least the most important elements of it) is translated into the national languages of the country. The representatives from other countries will do the same, i.e., translate the report in their own languages).
- To promote legal information through practical legal literacy training within each network entity. Train paralegals at the local level.
- To reinforce the capacities of women by training them in:
 - o Communication techniques
 - o Rights and duties of rural women
 - o Advocacy techniques
 - o Lobbying techniques
 - o Negotiation techniques

With this training, rural women will be able to work with existing groups, active pressure groups on political and economic decision makers, religious and customary leaders, for their voices to be heard at all levels.

(The representatives from the other countries will identify and record the training needs of rural women in their respective countries).

To the Government, the Donor Community and the International Partners:

- To help in carrying out in-depth studies aimed at gathering statistical and quantitative data, disaggregated according to sex, on land access and the management of its resources.
- To reinforce capacities of organisations so they can become information sources and able to identify local expertise and resource persons capable of supporting grassroots organisations in all domains linked to land issues.
- To reinforce the economic capacities of women by assisting them to:
 - o Implement income-generating development activities
 - o Create and manage profitable enterprises
 - o Access micro-credit
 - o Participate in Mutual benefit societies (in healthcare for example)
 - o Take part in training on transformation and conservation techniques for natural agricultural products
 - o Join together in the interests of mutual aid and solidarity
- Organize Information and sensitisation campaigns on land
- Sensitise students and pupils on gender equality (social justice).

The Executive Board and the Network Support Unit are responsible for follow-up on the workshop and the translation of the recommendations in an Action Plan spread over three years, with deadlines for the actions to be taken, for setting priorities according to the targets, and for finding the necessary financial means (budget and other resources). This Action Plan will form the basis for work of the Network.

The Rural Women Network of Senegal, and the members of Dimitra from other countries who were present at this workshop, agree to meet in three years time to measure the degree of advancement of this Action Plan.