THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (theme of the 37th FAO Conference)

Gender Team
Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
Regional Informal Consultation, Budapest, 3 March 2011

Today’s presentation:

- why Gender is important
- Concepts & Definitions
- the situation in Europe & Central Asia
- what is REU doing about Gender?
Gender inequality is not just a problem of women, but it is a problem of agricultural productivity, of food security and rural development.

- Unequal access to inputs reduces yields and hinders agricultural productivity, which

  - negatively affects the economy & food security at the national level – affecting both men & women

  - then at the global level
Why Women and Gender in FAO?

- studies show that closing the “gender gap” can increase agricultural productivity by over 10%!

Thus a shift in FAO focus from “Women” to “Gender” which is now one of our “Strategic Objectives”

women  →  gender
What is Gender?

- **Gender** is “social”; **sex** is “biological”

- Gender refers to the **qualities** or **characteristics** that society ascribes to each sex

- You are born female or male, but **learn** your role as a woman or man

- Perceptions of gender are deeply rooted

What is Gender?

- In all cultures, gender **determines roles and responsibilities**, as well as **power and resources** of women and men
Gender equality and equity

- Gender equality: women and men enjoy equal rights & opportunities
- Gender equity: fairness and impartiality in the treatment of women and men

You need equity to achieve equality

Women and Gender in FAO – Progress in Approaches

- From Women in Development (WID) to Gender and Development (GAD)
- From Gender Action Plans to a Strategic Objective
Gender, however, is a cross-cutting issue that should permeate the activities of all the other Strategic Objectives.

All FAO staff, at all levels, are responsible & accountable for mainstreaming gender in their work. Therefore, everyone at FAO should be an “ambassador” for gender.
4 Organizational Results:

1. Rural gender equality incorporated into UN Joint Programmes

2. National capacities to integrate gender equality through sex-disaggregated data are enhanced

3. Gender-sensitive policies in agriculture formulated

4. FAO staff have demonstrated commitment/capacity to address gender

The Work of FAO on Gender

- Gender, Equity and Rural Employment (ESW); and Gender Focal Point Network

- Gender equity in Human Resources Policy

- State of Food and Agriculture 2010-11
**The State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) 2010-11**

- Flagship FAO publication to be launched on 7 March 2011
- **Theme:** “Women in agriculture: closing the gender gap for development”
- Strong case for addressing gender in agriculture & rural employment: *women in all regions face gender-related constraints that reduce their productivity and impose real costs on society.*

**Gender in this Region:**

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<td>2 main issues:</td>
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<td>1.</td>
<td>general lack of sex-disaggregated data</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>misconceptions that no rural gender issues exist</td>
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In Central Asia, women account for 40% of the economically active population in agriculture.

Turkmenistan & Tajikistan: 53%
The Crucial Role of Women in Agriculture – Europe and Central Asia

• Mixed livestock grazing,
• Mixed cropping,
• Horticulture and
• Olive-farming
• Cotton cultivation
• Household food production

Main Gender Issues in Agriculture in Europe and Central Asia

• Lack of ownership and control over the land

• Lower access to education & training

• Rural employment:
  • Work-overload
  • Gender pay gap
  • Lack of access to decent work
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Gendered Impacts
1. Health
2. Human trafficking
3. Increased single parent households and their vulnerability

Landownership

- In the EU-27, women account for 23% of individual holders
  - Lowest in the Netherlands (5%) and Germany (10%)
  - Highest in the Baltics: 44%
    (Eurostat, 2007)
- Outside of the EU
  - Montenegro: 10.7%
  - Georgia 30%
  - Serbia 18%
Education and Agricultural Training

• Men have more access to education and training
  – In France 26% more male holders have full agricultural training than female holders

Incomplete education/training:
• low possibility to access better jobs
• uninformed about rights and opportunities

Political Representation

• Gender gaps in women’s participation in Agrarian Decision-Making Processes

  – In Albania (2006) the Agrarian Party had no women representatives

  – In Montenegro (2009) the Committee on Tourism, Agriculture, Environment and Spatial Planning consisted of only male members
Rural Employment

- **Women’s triple role**: hinders from filling permanent paid positions and leads to work overload
  
  - Central Asia: rural women spend only 30% of their time in paid labour
  - Lack of safety net decreases possibility of work improvement thus affecting family livelihoods
    - In Tajikistan 52% of the female agricultural workers are employed in low-wage jobs compared to 28% of men

Migration

- in Europe, women form half of the migrant population
  
  - Positive and Negative Effects
What Do We (REU) do about these Gender Issues?

In line with FAO’s Strategic Objective and the gender audit recommendations:
- **Increased human & financial resources focusing on gender**
- **Strengthened the role of gender focal point**
- **Gender “Strategic Objective” is addressed appropriately in workplans**
- **Training of REU staff on gender mainstreaming**

What Do We (REU) do about these Gender Issues?

- **Gender Statistics** *(WPW and ERC recommendations 1 and 8)*
  - Intensive Data research
  - National Capacity building

- **Gender Mainstreaming in REU**
  - Staff Capacity building
  - Gender mainstreamed projects

- **The Working Party on Women** and the Family in Rural Development (WPW) – under FAO ECA
Gender Statistics

- **Data Research** (also within the framework of the WPW)
  - Identify data gaps
  - Publication on the status of rural women in the region, based on the analysis of main data available (2012)

- **National Capacity building**
  - Training in sex-disaggregated data
  - Exchange of best practices/methodology
  - Establish ongoing cooperation re collection, exchange & analysis of data

Gender Mainstreaming

- Gender mainstreaming in the project cycle
  - *Gender mainstreaming is essentially the assessment of the implications for women and men of any planned action in all areas and at all levels.*

  70% of REU FAO is trained on Gender Mainstreaming (100% by 2012)
Gender Mainstreamed Projects:

• Support the Preparation of National *Land Consolidation* Strategy being implemented in Albania and in Bosnia and Herzegovina

• United Nations Joint Programme on *Reducing Malnutrition* in children in Albania (UNICEF, WHO)

The Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development

• *Subsidiary Statutory body* of the FAO European Commission on Agriculture (ECA)

• Unique *Expert Think Tank* and *Dynamic Knowledge Network* on issues relevant to *gender and rural development*

• *Future focus*: sex-disaggregated data and the status of rural women in the region
Thank you for your attention!