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para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE

### Thirty-sixth Session

Yerevan, Armenia, 11 and 12 May 2010

### Agenda Item 9

## MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ECA WORKING PARTY ON WOMEN AND THE FAMILY IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. Mainstreaming gender equity has become one of the main objectives of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO) new Strategic Framework 2010-2019, approved by the FAO Conference in November 2009. The Framework mainstreams gender equity in all of FAO's programmes for agriculture and rural development and places gender equity alongside such traditional key concerns as raising levels of nutrition and the sustainable intensification of crop production.

2. FAO has a comparative advantage in addressing rural gender issues as it has championed the contribution of women to food production and food security and spearheaded efforts to remove the barriers that limit their opportunities and rights. But critical gaps remain: cultural biases and lack of political will have led to uneven implementation of internationally agreed policies and conventions on gender equality and women's empowerment. Data to understand gender differences in access to productive resources remain scarce and the capacity of many countries to integrate gender issues in development programmes is still weak. Even where progress has been made, the capacity to implement policies and evaluate impact is often inadequate. FAO's gender strategy seeks to close those gaps and raise the level of gender equality in rural areas. A first step will be the implementation of a Gender Audit in FAO's headquarters and decentralized offices in 2010-2011, to establish baselines and provide a foundation for the development of improved accountability for gender within FAO.

3. The first part of this document briefly presents to the 36<sup>th</sup> Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA), the approach to mainstreaming gender in FAO's new Strategic Framework and selected approaches of FAO's global work in gender mainstreaming. The ECA may wish to review these approaches and, also based on the experience of member countries, offer recommendations for linking mainstreaming gender in the Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia subregions with FAO's global work.

4. The second part draws on selected ECA Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development (WPW) documents from recent sessions and expert meetings to indicate future orientations for WPW activities, based on the available record of past work and new developments. In 2008 and 2009 the secretariat prepared and presented a series of documents on WPW activities, respectively for the FAO 26th Regional Conference for Europe and the 35th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (Innsbruck, 2008) and the Thirteenth (Special) Session of the WPW (Rome, 15 April 2009). A special programme document has been prepared for the 14th WPW Session: Needs Assessment and Survey 2009: present status, options and future FAO activities and cooperation with stakeholders in gender in rural development in Europe and Central Asia (ECA:14thWPW/09/3).<sup>1</sup> The latter includes developed and specific recommendations for prospective WPW activities, based on comprehensive review of past work and meetings and the outcome of the special survey of WPW participants and stakeholders in spring 2009.

5. The secretariat will discuss with the WPW Board the timing of the next session of the WPW; while the recommendation was to link up the WPW to the FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC), it is proposed to convene the 15<sup>th</sup> Session after the 27th ERC in Yerevan, taking into account that in 2009 there were two WPW sessions. It is proposed that an informal meeting of the WPW Board be organized in Budapest in September/October 2010 to consult a draft work plan for the WPW and collate comments on the major programme document prepared and presented to the 14th WPW Session in Budapest in 2009, in particular the ECA: WPW/09/3

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<sup>1</sup> Available on the FAO REU Web site [http://www.fao.org/world/regional/REU/wpdocs\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/world/regional/REU/wpdocs_en.htm)

Needs Assessment and Survey. The interest and invitation by a host country for an expert meeting on a chosen technical subject in the second half of 2010, would also be reviewed.

## **II. MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN FAO'S NEW STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2010-2019**

6. FAO's new Strategic Framework will mainstream gender equity in all of its programmes for agriculture and rural development. The Framework identifies gender equity as one of the Organization's key objectives for the next ten years. Gender equity will be essential to implementing the decisions of the World Summit on Food Security, held in Rome in November 2009. Strategic Objective K, "Gender equity in access to resources, goods, services and decision-making in rural areas", has been formulated in response to evidence that gender inequality exacerbates food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty. Social and economic inequalities between men and women undermine food security and hold back economic growth and advances in agriculture. Strategies for agriculture and rural development do not always benefit rural populations, particularly women, but sometimes even amplify existing disparities. The trend is likely to worsen in the face of such challenges as climate change, international migration, transboundary infectious diseases and the global economic downturn. It is noted that unless gender is addressed comprehensively, the global community will not achieve the targets set by the 1996 World Food Summit nor the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

### **A. FAO'S COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE**

7. As the United Nations lead agency for agriculture and rural development, FAO has a comparative advantage in addressing rural gender issues. For decades, it has championed the contribution of women to food production and food security and spearheaded efforts to remove the barriers that limit their opportunities and rights. Between 1989 and 2001, two six-year FAO Plans of Action for "Women in development" focused on improving rural women's access to resources, training and other services. In 2003, a new plan for "Gender and development" defined the different roles and unequal power relations between women and men as a central category of analysis, applying it not just to "women's projects" but to the Organization's wider programme of work, and linking it to the achievement of the MDGs.

8. The three key instruments for the 2003-2007 plan, which are now at the core of Strategic Objective K, were capacity development, raising awareness and gender-sensitive indicators and statistics. FAO led efforts to promote gender mainstreaming in agriculture through socio-economic and gender analysis training courses for an estimated 4 000 development specialists in more than 100 countries<sup>2</sup>. FAO also trained national policy analysts in the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data and developed gender-sensitive indicators in technical fields ranging from animal health and water management to nutrition, fisheries and rural employment. Through capacity building and access to more reliable data, FAO has promoted gender-sensitive policy and planning in 30 countries. For example, gender perspectives are now seen as central to FAO's strategy for disaster risk management, and have been incorporated prominently in its emergency relief and rehabilitation operations.

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<sup>2</sup> See Socio-economic and Gender Analysis Programme at [http://www.fao.org/sd/seaga/index\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/sd/seaga/index_en.htm)

**FAO'S TARGETS 2008-2013**

To mainstream gender equity in its programmes for agriculture and rural development, FAO has set itself the following targets for 2013:

**United Nations policies and joint programmes**

Support gender mainstreaming in agriculture and rural development within the "One UN" initiative; identify needs, gaps and entry points for FAO technical support and contribute to common approaches to gender within the United Nations system.

**Policies for agriculture and rural development**

Assist governments in integrating gender into development policies and programmes through the analysis of disparities that affect people's access to resources and of issues that threaten gender equity and rural livelihoods.

**Capacity building**

Expand support to training in gender mainstreaming (using tools pioneered by FAO's Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis programme [SEAGA]), and to the collection, analysis and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data and statistics used in policy-making.

**FAO skills, resources and technical programmes**

Upgrade the gender analysis skills of FAO staff, allocate specific budgets to meet gender targets and support the Organization-wide network of gender focal points to promote gender mainstreaming in all FAO technical programmes.

**B. GENDER IN FAO RURAL EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY**

9. Mainstreaming gender is a key component in policies and programmes to manage agricultural and rural non-agricultural employment in rural areas that is critical for reducing poverty and food insecurity, as labour is often the only asset that poor women and men own.<sup>3</sup> Yet, many rural jobs do not ensure decent levels of income and sustainable livelihoods. Instead, rural employment is often characterized by poor working conditions, unenforced labour legislation, limited access to social security and protection and weak social dialogue. Gender inequalities in the extent and quality of participation in rural labour markets are also a major reason why women, globally, are disproportionately represented among the poor.

10. The MDGs have helped to raise awareness of the importance of decent employment, particularly in rural areas. While the International Labour Organization (ILO) takes the lead in promoting the Global Employment and Decent Work Agendas, FAO has a crucial complementary role to play in enhancing decent and productive rural employment in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, livestock, agroprocessing and rural marketing enterprises and industries. FAO's rural employment strategy responds to the Chief Executives Board's for Coordination call for greater policy coherence and convergence on decent work across the United Nations system. It is also a direct response to the Independent External Evaluation's (IEE) recommendation to refocus FAO's work on value addition and employment for income generation and food access.

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<sup>3</sup> Based on: FAO Committee on Agriculture, Twenty-first Session, Rome, 22-23 April 2009: Elements of an FAO Rural Employment Strategy – Productive, Fair and Just Employment for Rural Development and Food Security

11. FAO's main emphasis in the first phase (2009-2011) will be on maximizing the decent work benefits of key Regular Programme areas within the Organization's comparative advantage, including:

- supporting employment generation and enterprise development by strengthening policies to address agricultural labour allocation, productivity and remuneration. Critical components include support for agro-industrial investment, entrepreneurship and an enabling environment for agribusiness, rural microfinance services, market-oriented rural infrastructure, labour-saving or workload distributing technologies, diversification and improvement of rural livelihoods, as well as vocational training in business skills. Development of capacities for collection and analysis of rural labour data and policy support to ensure that benefits reach vulnerable segments of the labour force, such as youth, women, waged workers, small business operators and people with disabilities, will also be essential; and
- partnerships with ILO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and others with expertise and mandates that complement FAO's, are an essential part of the strategy.

12. An example of recent FAO work was a jointly organized workshop, in partnership with ILO and IFAD, on "Gaps, trends and current research in gender dimensions of agricultural and rural employment: differentiated pathways out of poverty" (2009)<sup>4</sup>. Reports and presentations from all regions, including Central and Eastern European and Central Asian countries, reviewed impacts of globalization on rural employment measures to strengthen rural labour markets and explored gender differences in rural occupations and off- and on-farm incomes and implications of various types of institutional arrangements, ranging from producer organizations and cooperatives, to involving small farmers in supply to supermarket chains, strategies and good practices for strengthening women's participation and effective leadership.

13. The workshop afforded an opportunity to share experience of best practices and policy options to reduce gender inequalities, including for example, measures to quantify and compensate unpaid men's and women's work in rural households. This exchange will generate new thinking and policies on rural employment, identify elements of a longer-term research agenda and help establish a network of partners to promote gender equitable rural employment in the future. Through such actions, FAO's rural employment strategy should enable member countries to generate decent and remunerative employment opportunities that enhance rural well-being and sustainable livelihoods. Central and Eastern European countries are involved in the activity.

14. The ECA Session may wish to comment on the aforementioned approaches' relevance to the FAO activities in the Europe and Central Asia region and enhance the debate with examples of successful country or regional approaches and activities.

### **C. GENDER GAP IN LAND RIGHTS DATABASE**

15. A new Gender and Land Rights Database produced by the FAO Economic and Social Development Department (ES) in consultation with national statistics authorities, universities, civil society organizations and other sources worldwide, is an example of FAO's work to mainstream gender into rural policies. The database offers up-to-date information on how men and women in 78 countries, including the European region, differ in their legal rights and access to land. In most of the world, women lag behind men in ownership of agricultural land and access to income from land, even though women are major producers of food crops and play crucial roles in providing and caring for their households.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See: <http://www.fao-ilo.org/fao-ilo-gende/en/> for papers and report

<sup>5</sup> Reports are available also for Central and Eastern European and Central Asian countries (see <http://fao.org/gender/landrights>)

16. The database offers information on the following six categories:
- National legal frame:
    - Rights entrenched in the Constitution;
    - Women's property and use rights in Civil Code, Labour Code, Family Code;
    - Inheritance legal mechanisms;
    - Land law;
    - Policies/institutional mechanisms enforcing or preventing women's land rights;
  - Implementation of international treaties and conventions;
  - Customary law;
  - Land tenure and related institutions;
  - Civil society organizations;
  - Selected land related statistics.
17. The ECA may wish to provide guidance of involvement and earmarking resources of the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) as well as the Subregional Offices for Central and Eastern Europe (SEU) and Central Asia (SEC) into the database work, taking into account noted gaps in gender-disaggregated data in the subregions.

#### **D. GENDER MAINSTREAMING PRIORITIES IN THE EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA REGION**

18. REU engages in gender-focused activities such as those undertaken by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), with which it shares the geographical focus on involving and assisting Central Asia transition economies but also the programme approach to value addition and employment for income generation and food access and enhancing decent and productive employment in rural areas. One approach to gender-sensitive economic policies in practice where exchange of experience is promising, is the concept of gender-responsive budgeting. Under the Council of Europe definition this means “a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality”.<sup>6</sup> This includes a gender impact assessment of public expenditure and revenues, from direct and indirect taxation, revenues from privatization and user fees of public services; a crucial variable is unpaid labour, whether by male or female workers, that needs to be quantified and accounted for. Privatization of public community services, child care or basic health can enhance or limit opportunities for women to take up work outside the household; costs of privatization may be disproportionately borne by women.
19. Promoting gender equality in the labour market and affirmative action for women's employability is another area in the Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia subregions where exchange of positive and practical experience is proposed. Support to female entrepreneurship and self-employment would include targeted support in periods of tight credit to small self-employed businesses, often women start and run informal services in rural areas and small towns, but also simpler flexible work arrangements. It would also include protection and fair remuneration of vulnerable employment such as unregistered workers in family enterprises with no formal salary and social protection. Specific programmes and projects for enhancing the training of women re-entering the labour markets are needed but also approaches specifically recognizing unpaid household work and family care in pension systems.
20. It is noted that the present financial and economic crises can aggravate gender inequality. Along the lines of the aforementioned gender-responsive budgeting, fiscal stimuli packages to

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<sup>6</sup> Council of Europe (2005), quoted after United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Beijing +15 Regional Review Meeting, Geneva, 2-3 November 2009 Gender-Sensitive Economic Policies in the context of the Economic and Financial Crisis ECE/AC.28/2009/5; the Council of Europe document is available at: [http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human\\_Rights/Equality/PDF\\_CDEG%202008%2015\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human_Rights/Equality/PDF_CDEG%202008%2015_en.pdf)

protect women's rights and employment opportunities, such as rural banking sector instruments, are offered and awareness of gender impacts of debt relief or economic incentives are sought.

21. While many studies and reports are available on the gender perspective and policy choices in response to the economic and financial Crises in Central and Eastern European countries and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS),<sup>7</sup> there is considerably less research and policy analyses of the situation of rural women, even though these constitute a majority of the poor. The ECA may wish to offer guidance to REU on commissioning such a study that would cover, among others:

- impact of 2009-2010 economic and financial crises on the Central and Eastern European countries and CIS in the region with focus on rural population groups and women analysed, based on macroeconomic and social and poverty indicators;
- increased financial fragility in investment, national account and trade balances, external remittances flows and impacts on rural poor with focus on women;
- an assessment of impact/s of growing agricultural and food prices on rural households and response by rural women to crisis situations and household survival strategies and review of policy response and rural households survival strategies in selected country groups;
- short- and medium-term impacts on rural poverty and situation of rural women and families, with focus on human capital development, including analyses of available changes in wage gaps, changes in poverty groups and opportunities for emergence from crisis situations for female headed households in rural areas (if known);
- gender focus on fiscal and economic stimulus plants implemented and proposed, including training for new jobs for women in different age groups and analysis of impacts on education opportunities curtailed by increased poverty and remedy policies and programmes;
- experience of backtracking on gender equity reforms, if data available, during periods of economic and financial crises and approaches to use economic and fiscal stimuli packages for enhancing gender equity and continued support for investment in human capital.

## **E. THE WAY FORWARD FOR WPW ACTIVITIES**

22. The secretariat presented to the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the WPW in mid-2009 a comprehensive needs assessment with recommendations for activities for the WPW, that takes into account the situation and past and proposed activities in gender mainstreaming in the Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia subregions<sup>8</sup>. The recommendations are based on a comprehensive overview of past WPW activities, in particular thematic technical expert meetings seen against a background of FAO global approaches to gender mainstreaming and parallel activities of other major stakeholders in the Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia subregions. The needs assessment reviewed and proposed a series of new approaches to increasing cooperation with other stakeholders in gender in rural areas, involving other ministries than those responsible for agriculture and working with International Financing Institutions (IFIs), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as well as taking advantage of experience of successful European Union rural projects such as LEADER. Specific recommendations included:

- the WPW should continue to develop as an Expert Think Tank and Dynamic Knowledge Network. It should offer a neutral forum to discuss gender-related issues as they related

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<sup>7</sup> The Economic and Financial Crises in CEE and CIS: Gender Perspectives and Policy Choices by Fatma Gul Unal, Mirjana Dokmanovic and Rafis Abazov, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) Discussion Paper; A Contribution to the Beijing +15 Regional review Meeting, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Geneva 2009

<sup>8</sup> See ECA:14thWPW/09/3: Needs Assessment and Survey 2009: Present Status, Options and Future FAO Activities and Cooperation With Stakeholders in Gender in Rural Development in Europe and Central Asia – Recommendations for the ECA WPW, available at [http://www.fao.org/world/Regional/resources/more/wpw/wpw\\_14\\_3.pdf](http://www.fao.org/world/Regional/resources/more/wpw/wpw_14_3.pdf)

to food, agriculture and poverty in the region, and encourage the exchange of new information and experiences with a view to addressing new and recurring gender related poverty challenges in the region;

- it should promote the professional development of rural women and build a network of individuals willing to provide technical advice in devising gender sensitive national agricultural policy and strategies to achieve rural development and poverty alleviation goals;
- the WPW has begun to move more broadly in the question of rural development, off farm as well as on farm. It is recommended that this trend continue;
- the WPW should attract and facilitate more member countries in the Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia subregions, particularly those which have joined FAO activities in the past 10-15 years. This would mean a substantial increase in representatives from Central and Eastern European countries and CIS, which would strengthen the WPW and enrich the experience and learning of its members;
- a dedicated WPW Web site, containing position papers, presentations, links to partners and a database should be developed. In developing such a web site, the WPW should look to the well-designed and comprehensive Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESW)-supported Dimitra Web site;
- a substantial portion of the participants attending expert meetings comes from universities and research institutes; the WPW should develop its links with universities in Central and Eastern European countries and CIS that have links to rural development programmes and access to educational grants;
- the WPW should also consider developing links with and collaborating with trade unions throughout the Central and Eastern Europe and CIS region;
- the WPW should consider holding technical workshops on how to compile funding proposals to secure funding through various international, national and regional programmes, projects and funding sources (such as the ongoing or successor European Union projects). A well planned and delivered workshop, enabling WPW members to apply for funding could have lasting positive impacts for the Members' organizations and for the WPW.

23. The 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> WPW Sessions in 2009 as well as recently held expert meetings, have provided a comprehensive list of priority areas for gender mainstreaming in rural development in the region.<sup>9</sup> These may be summarized as follows (for annotated summary see Annex 2):

- impacts of globalization on small farms and their marginalization as they affect rural women;
- policies to counteract migrations in place of origin and improving the situation of female migrants and their families, including incentives to return;
- HIV/AIDS impact on rural society and families including increased food insecurity;
- increased pressure on natural resources and policies and programmes to assist women farmers in sustainable management of scarce resources, including adaptation to and mitigation of climate change;
- disaster-related events and emergencies that affect women as household managers and programmes for their mitigation and recovery strategies;
- diseases (human, plant and animal) as a risk to rural women's and family health, including epidemics;
- information technology to improve rural women's access to information, markets and vocational training;
- training and capacity building to assist rural women, in particular elderly with low vocational skills to diversify incomes and jobs;

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<sup>9</sup> See: Report on Activities following the 12<sup>th</sup> WPW Session (2004) for the Fourteenth Session of the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development, Budapest, Hungary, 29 June-1 July 2009 available at [http://www.fao.org/world/Regional/resources/more/wpw/wpw\\_14\\_2.pdf](http://www.fao.org/world/Regional/resources/more/wpw/wpw_14_2.pdf)

- ensuring decent work in rural areas; a gendered perspective;
- the role of trade unions in rural areas in Central and Eastern Europe and CIS;
- mainstreaming gender into rural and land reforms.

#### **F. GENDER-DISAGGREGATED DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSES FOR RURAL PEOPLE**

24. The ECA may wish to provide guidance for involvement and earmarking resources of REU as well as SEU and SEC for the aforementioned programme approaches and specific technical subject to be addressed by WPW sessions and expert meetings, taking into account the priorities discerned in the 2009 Needs Assessment and Survey.

## ANNEX 1 – SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND GENDER ANALYSIS PROGRAMME (SEAGA) MANUALS AND GUIDES

The Socio-economic and Gender Analysis Programme (SEAGA) guides are issue and sector specific guides that integrate socio-economic and gender analysis. For example, the 'SEAGA Sector Guide on Irrigation' combines irrigation issues and practices with socio-economic and gender analysis concerns. The emphasis is on 'why' and 'how' to plan activities in a participatory way. The guide uses real examples and studies to illustrate main issues and the practical use of tools and concepts. The target audiences are extensionists, government and non-government field workers, private- and public-sector development consultants, community organizers and leaders of local groups and institutions as well as policy- and decision-makers who work at the international and/or national level; ministry officials, heads of non-governmental agencies or private institutions, who are involved in national or international policy-making. All the SEAGA publications are designed to be easily adaptable to national and regional circumstances.

Component	Publications
SEAGA Information	<a href="#">LEAFLET</a>
SEAGA Handbooks	<a href="#">FIELD LEVEL HANDBOOK</a>
	<a href="#">INTERMEDIATE LEVEL HANDBOOK</a>
	<a href="#">MACROLEVEL HANDBOOK</a>
SEAGA Guides	<a href="#">IRRIGATION</a>
	<a href="#">LIVESTOCK: PLANNING WITH A GENDER AND HIV/AIDS LENS</a>
	<a href="#">PROJECT CYCLE</a>
	<a href="#">RURAL HOUSEHOLDS AND RESOURCES: A GUIDE FOR EXTENSION WORKERS</a>
	<a href="#">RURAL HOUSEHOLDS AND RESOURCES: A POCKET GUIDE FOR EXTENSION WORKERS</a>
	<a href="#">ADDRESSING HIV/AIDS THROUGH AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCE SECTORS</a>
	<a href="#">MICROFINANCE</a>
	<a href="#">GENDER-DISAGGREGATED DATA FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT</a>
	<a href="#">PASSPORT TO MAINSTREAMING A GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN EMERGENCY OPERATIONS</a>
	<a href="#">SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND GENDER ANALYSIS FOR EMERGENCY AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES</a>

## **ANNEX 2 – THE WORKING PARTY ON WOMEN (WPW) PRIORITIES IN THE REGION<sup>10</sup>**

The Working Party on Women (WPW) activities will take into consideration the global trends that will have a major impact in the coming years on gender roles and relations in agriculture and food security. Focus on global trends and their gender aspects and development approach, as summarized below, was recommended both by the FAO Gender and Development Plan (GAD) Plan of Action (PoA) 2002-2007 and FAO GAD PoA 2008-2013, thus:

- globalization: growing inequalities and marginalization of small farms and conflicts due to the development of large-scale farms and access to resources. The majority of farmers who experience limited access to resources, markets, training and decision-making opportunities are women;
- rural population dynamics:
  - rural-urban migrations: female/male migrations and repercussions on the rural population, farms and families; feminization/masculinization of agriculture and its poverty challenges for gender-based roles and division of labour; role of remittances in local economic development;
  - ageing of the rural population. The impact on the composition of the rural labour force and the division of labour by age and sex, combined with outmigration;
- HIV/AIDS: devastating impact on agricultural production and food security. Invaluable knowledge on indigenous farming methods and strategies for coping with food shortages are lost;
- increased pressure on natural resources: farming contributes to a significant degree to environmental degradation. Non-sustainable management and use of natural resources threatens rural livelihoods and their future sustainability. Increasing agricultural productivity in a sustainable manner is vital to achieving sustainable food security and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Women's vital contribution to managing biological resources should receive increased attention. Secure land tenure systems will provide access to land and other natural resources for the rural poor and allow them to accumulate assets and ensure household food security;
- disaster-related and complex emergencies (conflicts, human-induced and natural disasters): emergencies affect women as household managers. Gender analysis can help the development of disaster mitigation and recovery strategies that address the needs of both women and families effectively;
- diseases (human, plant and animal): women's health and livelihoods are particularly at risk due to agriculture-related diseases (e.g. Avian Influenza). The epidemic diseases (HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis) continue to pose a threat to rural lives and livelihoods;
- information technology: the technology revolution can accelerate progress towards gender equality, but it can also exacerbate existing inequalities. Rural women usually are at a disadvantage in making informed choices for example about what to produce or how to access markets. Lack of information also limits women's influence in communities and ability to participate in decision-making;
- climate change and bioenergy: climate change exacerbates existing vulnerability and food insecurity. As women and men are affected differently by the scarcity of resources, gender sensitive adaptation and mitigation approaches are needed.

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<sup>10</sup> See ECA:14<sup>th</sup> WPW/09/3: Needs Assessment and Survey 2009: Present Status, Options and Future FAO Activities and Cooperation with Stakeholders in Gender in Rural Development in European and Central Asia – Recommendations for the ECA WPW, available at [http://www.fao.org/world/Regional/resources/more/wpw/wpw\\_14\\_3.pdf](http://www.fao.org/world/Regional/resources/more/wpw/wpw_14_3.pdf)