



**Global
Forum**
on Food Security
and Nutrition

 Proceedings

Focusing on Rural Women in a Sustainable Development Goals Framework

Collection of contributions received

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction to the topic.....	4
Contributions received	6
1. Hart Jansson, Malnutrition Matters, Canada.....	6
2. Natália Menhem, Brazil.....	9
3. Jader José Oliveira, Planning and Internal Management, Brazil	9
4. Claudio Schuftan, PHM, Viet Nam.....	10
5. Charles Kayumba, Heifer International Country Director, Rwanda.....	10
6. Landesa, USA.....	10
7. Markus Buerli, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Switzerland.....	11
8. Nita Mawar, Ministry of Health and Family welfare, India	12
9. Henry Kizito, Good Neighbors Development Organisation, Uganda.....	13
10. Manuel Castrillo, Proyecto Camino Verde, Costa Rica.....	13
11. Thomas Sommerhalter, Concern Worldwide, Ireland	14
12. Muhammad Ariful Haque, Kamfisht Universe Engineering, Bangladesh (first contribution)	14
13. Botir Dosov, CACAARI, Uzbekistan.....	14
14. Public Health Institute, USA	15
15. Ana Carvajal, EduSaludMujer, Venezuela.....	16
16. Kiriaki Arali Orpinel Espino Tibúame, Asociación Civil, Mexico.....	16
17. Muhammad Ariful Haque, Kamfisht Universe Engineering, Bangladesh (second contribution) .	19
18. Maria Antip, International Fertilizer Industry Association, France	19
19. Morgane Danielou, Farming First, France.....	20
20. Henry Kizito, Good Neighbors Development Organization, Uganda.....	20
21. Themba Phiri, Jam International, South Africa.....	21
22. Mamadou Saliou Diallo, CAFT, Senegal.....	22
23. Carsta Neuenroth, Bread for the World, Germany.....	22
24. Kirunda David , Uganda	24
25. James F. Albrecht International Police Association, United States of America.....	24
26. Eileen Omosa University of Alberta, and Centre for Basic Research & Networking Africa, Canada	27
27. Hans Friederich, International Network for Bamboo and Rattan, China	28
28. Santosh Kumar Mishra, Population Education Resource Centre (PERC), India.....	29

29. Nuhu Danboyi, M4D, Nigeria.....	30
30. Senait Regassa, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Ethiopia	31
31. Amin Al-Hakimi, Yemeni Association for Sustainable Agriculture Development, Yemen	31
32. Gomathy Venkateswar , India.....	31
33. Paul Rigterink, Potomac Technical Advisors, United States of America.....	32
34. Cesarie Kantarama, Rwanda received through Katy Lee, International Agri-Food Network, Italy.....	33
35. Rose Akak, Uganda National Farmers' Federation, Rwanda received through Katy Lee, International Agri-Food Network, Italy.....	34
36. Barack Kinanga, Save the Children UK, Sudan.....	37
37. Miren Larrea, Foro Rural Mundial -FRM, Spain	37
38. Raissa Muhutdinova, Global Civil Initiatives, Inc., Kyrgyzstan	39
39. Gomathy Venkateswar , India.....	39
40. Gomathy Venkateswar , India.....	40
41. Anna Antwi, GD Resource Center (development NGO), Ghana	40
42. Jacqueline Fletcher, France	41
43. Tamara Quiroz Guzmàn, Facultad de Ciencias Agriolas y Forestales-UACH, Mexico.....	42
44. Tessa Vorbohle, HelpAge International, United Kingdom.....	43
45. Peter Steele, Independent Consultant Agricultural Engineer, Italy.....	43
46. Richard Allen, Italy.....	45

Introduction to the topic

"Globally and with only a few exceptions, rural women fare worse than rural men and urban women and men for every MDG indicator for which data are available." (Interagency Task Force on Rural Women, Fact Sheet on Rural Women, 2012)

On Thursday 6 February, the Rome-based Agencies (Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Food Programme (WFP), will host a side-event focusing on rural women in an SDG Framework at the Eighth session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals held in New York.

This mini-consultation is aimed at stimulating wider discussion on the topic of rural women. While the consultation is not designed to feed information directly into the event itself, the inclusive approach of the Open Working Group encourages debate on subjects related to each session.

Rural women everywhere play a key role in supporting their households and communities in achieving food and nutrition security, generating income, and improving rural livelihoods and overall well-being. They contribute to agriculture and rural enterprises and fuel local and global economies. As such, they are active players in achieving the MDGs.

Yet, every day, around the world, rural women and girls face persistent structural constraints that prevent them from fully enjoying their human rights and hamper their efforts to improve their lives as well as those of others around them.

Poor rural people face multiple forms of deprivations and discrimination. Rural women, in particular, face major barriers to access productive resources and face disadvantages and exclusion rooted in the power inequalities associated with gender roles, leaving them disproportionately represented among the rural poor.

This side event will support the Eighth Session of the OWG's focus on "Promoting equality, including social equity, gender equality and women's empowerment". It will explore ways to ensure that a post-2015 development agenda improves the status of rural women through a rights based approach and the implementation of improved policies, strategies and targeted interventions, underpinned by strengthening governance and relevant institutions. It will discuss, inter alia, priorities for improving rural women's livelihoods, access to justice and legal rights, economic empowerment, and access to decision making at all levels, and thus show how improved conditions of women in rural areas can help to achieve all development goals. Emphasis will be put on targets and indicators supported by gender disaggregated data to better monitor progress in rural women's lives.

The Panel will include senior representatives of the three organizing partners, an organization of rural women, and at least one representative of a national government.

Your thoughts and views addressing the subject of rural women would be a valuable addition to the online discussion ahead of the side-event at the Open Working Group. We are eager to receive your responses on the following questions:

- 1. If you could make an intervention at the side event on rural women at the 8th session of the Open Working Group in New York, what would be its key message?**
- 2. Rural women are often described as critical agents of change in discussions on sustainable development goals. To what extent would the achievement of food and nutrition security for rural women help accelerate sustainable development?**
- 3. Of the many facts or stats recorded on rural women, which one do you consider to be the most revealing?**

Contributions received

1. Hart Jansson, Malnutrition Matters, Canada

1. If you could make an intervention at the side event on rural women at the 8th session of the Open Working Group in New York, what would be its key message?

As the Copenhagen Consensus (2012) has concluded, the consumption of protein and micro-nutrients is the most cost-effective way to address health and physical development among the working poor in developing countries. This objective can be achieved in a sustainable manner, with new jobs being created for rural women. Malnutrition Matters has implemented numerous projects in rural Asia and sub-Saharan Africa where micro-nutrient-fortified soymilk is made and profitably sold to consumers making ca. \$2/day. The stainless steel VitaGoat system, designed by Malnutrition Matters, which pressure-cooks 30L of soymilk per hour at 110C in a fuel-efficient way, with no need for electricity, running water or packaging, can operate in the most basic environment. It can provide a 200ml serving of soymilk with 7g of protein and the RDA for Vitamin A, Iron, Vitamin B12, Vitamin C, Folic Acid and Zinc for less than 7 cents per serving. The VitaGoat can reach 1,000 beneficiaries per day and create 4 to 5 full-time rural jobs per system. There are 250 VitaGoats installed today, with over 100,000 continuous beneficiaries, and some have been operating for 10 years. Local produce is used and there is no 'profit leakage' outside the community. A quadruple benefit is realized: significant improvement in nutrition affordable to rural poor, sustainable job creation for rural women, increased demand and revenue for local produce (soybeans) and much lower impact on the environment than with animal protein. See malnutrition.org for more information. Spreadsheets are available to demonstrate the sustainable business model realized at various operational sites.

2. Rural women are often described as critical agents of change in discussions on sustainable development goals. To what extent would the achievement of food and nutrition security for rural women help accelerate sustainable development?

I believe that achieving food and nutrition security for rural women in a sustainable manner, is itself a vital part of sustainable development. Because it would result in much less malnutrition and stunting, the populace would experience much greater 'value in life-years' (VLYs) due to good health and proper physical and neurological development, which would enable the GDP of that region / country to increase substantially. Please see the below the comments on the recent *Lancet* Commission : '*Global Health 2035*' for further thoughts on the role of nutrition in achieving greater health and contributing to sustainable development.

Comments from 'the field' on the *Lancet* Commission Global Health 2035: Convergence within a Generation - A Pragmatic Focus on Nutrition is Missing

Feb 3, 2014

Author: Hart Jansson, Malnutrition Matters

The *Lancet* Commission 'Global Health 2035' posits that the key to achieving substantial gains in health among the rural poor in low and middle-income countries is the improvement in these countries of universally available and competent health care. I have great respect for the authors' experience and insight, and agree with the Commission's recommendations. Respectfully, while I am sure the implementation of these recommendations would yield noticeable improvement, I suggest that truly substantial gains will be had only with a 'Grand Convergence' that includes improved nutrition for the rural poor. My observation as a development professional, working in rural India and rural Africa, is that poor nutrition is usually the major cause for poor RMNCH statistics. A better-funded and better run health system can, of course, intervene in crisis situations, but a health system which does not address nutrition, cannot prevent wasting and stunting and, in many cases, deaths among tens of millions of children who are chronically malnourished (especially protein and micro-nutrient deficient) and repeatedly ill. Indeed, although the need for better nutrition to improve health is mentioned numerous times in the *Lancet* Commission, no substantial actions or follow-through are apparent in this regard.

Section four of the paper mentions the 4 Cs (Chile, China, Cuba and Costa Rica) as examples of countries that have invested in improved universal health care systems, implying that this investment is responsible for the better health standard among the poor in those countries. What is not pointed out is that these countries also have much lower malnutrition/stunting rates than other low and middle-income countries. The published stunting rates for children under five on UNICEF and FAO websites are: Chile 2%, Cuba 5%, Costa Rica 6% and China 14%. Compare this with stunting rates in other low and middle-income countries which are up to ten times higher: Angola 53%, India 52%, Malawi 48% and Nigeria 43%. So, let us consider that the lower malnutrition rates are either the primary cause for improved health standards in the 4 C countries, or at least an important contributing factor. This would set the stage for us to contemplate the 'Grand Convergence' that includes an appropriate emphasis and investment in improved rural nutrition.

I would suggest that a **sustainable approach to improved rural nutrition** is vital to achieve the objectives of the Grand Convergence of Global Health 2035. By improved rural nutrition, I mean an approach that provides **low-cost protein and micro-nutrients** to the rural poor; these are the vital ingredients missing to most malnourished children (as corroborated by the Copenhagen Consensus of 2012, referenced by the *Lancet* Commission). 'Low-cost' means at a price affordable to the working poor earning \$1-2 per day. At that income level, one cannot afford a packaged product, whether imported or produced in regional cities, entailing a higher price to cover transport to the rural areas.

Malnutrition Matters, a Canadian based NGO with 13 years experience working in Africa and Asia, and focusing on appropriate technology to improve nutrition, generally using locally grown soybeans, has a documented track record achieving just such a sustainable approach to improved rural nutrition. We have found it fairly straightforward to work with villagers to produce **locally-made soymilk** with a system called a VitaGoat, that can provide **7gm. of whole protein** (plus calories from fat and carbohydrates) **and the RDA for the key micro-nutrients** needed for healthy development -- **at a cost of less than 10 cents per serving**. This approach is working on a sustainable basis at sites in Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Ghana and Zambia and is being incubated and/or already partially successful in India, Liberia and Myanmar.

A daily serving of protein/micro-nutrients, such as is available through soymilk, in addition to the typical diet that provides sufficient calories (even if nutrient poor), can prevent the majority of chronic child malnutrition one observes today at rates around 50% in rural India and rural sub-Saharan Africa. The additional benefits of this approach are that it creates sustainable employment for rural women (mostly) who are processing the soymilk and would create additional demand for local produce such as soybeans. So, there is a triple benefit of: improved nutrition for the poor; local sustainable jobs for women, and; increased income for small landholders. **The key is sustainability:** this is an approach that does not require improved local infrastructure or continuous donations, because it is **a profitable local economic activity** engaged in by the working poor who produce, process/add value to and consume the product. The result is a virtuous circle of improved health and incomes.

The VitaGoat system that Malnutrition Matters has developed and helped to successfully imbed in the countries noted above in Africa and Asia is highly scalable; moreover, micro-enterprise incubation costs go down as scale goes up. Initial investment costs per beneficiary are relatively tiny: a one-time investment per beneficiary (ie per person consuming the soymilk) of \$15 or less; this \$15 could be contributed in part by local governments, including school-feeding programs, and in part by international donors of various kinds. The return on investment can be measured in increased value of additional life-years (VLYs). As stunting causes severe debilitation both physically and neurologically, the benefits vs. the cost of this nutrition intervention would undoubtedly be highly positive and likely more effective when compared to spending only on health-care systems. The final benefit is environmental: human consumption of plant-based protein is 10 to 20 times more efficient in land, water and energy usage than consumption of animal protein.

So, what is the catch, you might say? In short, the 'problem' with this type of approach is that there may not be much profit here for the large firms and, therefore, it does not fit into the corporate biotechnology vision for the 'Green Revolution' in Africa, which inevitably involves a livestock component to produce animal protein. As a consequence, it is difficult to cultivate interest from the private sector or even from most large foundations.

The main objective of this commentary is to note that **affordable, improved rural nutrition is possible and that it must, therefore, be put back on the policy table and made a key component of the Grand Convergence.** If interest in Malnutrition Matters' technology, such as the non-electric 'VitaGoat' soybean processor is also stimulated, then the author would consider that a pleasant side effect.

There are of course numerous large-scale nutrition improvement initiatives such as those being undertaken by GAIN, AIM and SUN, not to mention UN agencies such as FAO, UNICEF, WFP, IFAD and IITA. Undoubtedly, these organizations would be willing partners in a Grand Convergence and the addition of their approaches to improve nutrition would achieve greater effect.

More information on the VitaGoat and a sustainable approach to improved rural nutrition can be found at www.malnutrition.org or contact Hart Jansson at hart@malnutrition.org

2. Natália Menhem, Brazil

1. If you could make an intervention at the side event on rural women at the 8th session of the Open Working Group in New York, what would be its key message?

We must guarantee the basic and respect the diversity. For rural women it materializes in good education for their children, a trustful health system in the rural area, letting women more confident about her family health, professional education for the women, aiming to give them tools to improve their income and to be included in the regional market (causing also more self esteem, essential for their human development), and last, a better way for them to communicate. Women are wonderful in communicating their issues and the solutions they have found for it. But usually rural areas have no internet access and bad phone access - so we lose a great potential of knowledge and they lose great chance to know more on how to change their reality.

2. Rural women are often described as critical agents of change in discussions on sustainable development goals. To what extent would the achievement of food and nutrition security for rural women help accelerate sustainable development?

Well, when they are confident about what to eat until the end of the month and about their children health, they can work better, educate their children better and also be wiser to produce on their lands.

3. Of the many facts or stats recorded on rural women, which one do you consider to be the most revealing?

The constant unsafeness they live about their children education and health. The low level of technical education or information they have to make their decision and to make their lives. Usually rural areas seems a more men space, but when getting inside houses and families, women are the balance of the family working. They are so away of special policies for their development, human and educational.

3. Jader José Oliveira, Planning and Internal Management, Brazil

I think we need to expand to other countries the successful experiences of existing worldwide economic inclusion. In Brazil , for example , the creation of specific organs and councils with social participation has helped in building policies specific to women, such as credit limits for the production of food from their organizations (PRONAF - woman). Agricultural marketing women have special treatment in the shares of the Food Acquisition Program . The National Plan of Policies for Women was built with the women's movement and has goals for gender equality and economic empowerment. Progress was made in granting titles to the land on behalf of women and process in the issuance of the Statement of Fitness for Pronaf , essential for access to government subsidies. The Thousand Women Program empowers women to professions seen as masculine , such as construction , drivers , electricians , painters and about U.S. \$ 260 million (\$ 130 million) will be invested in fighting violence against women by 2015.

4. Claudio Schuftan, PHM, Viet Nam

1. If you could make an intervention at the side event on rural women at the 8th session of the Open Working Group in New York, what would be its key message?

Rural women are often described as critical agents of change in discussions on sustainable development goals. To what extent would the achievement of food and nutrition security for rural women help accelerate sustainable development?

In my opinion a key message that cannot be missed is that, in the light of sustainable development, the concept of food sovereignty is much more gender proactive than the food security notion. As you say, women can be critical agents, but this is enhanced manifold using a food sovereignty focus. The appeal should thus be for UN agencies sponsoring this 8th session to give-in to this paradigmatic change . Public interest civil society has been making this point to FAO and other agencies for long, but to no avail. The 8th session is yet another chance to make this unpostponable appeal.

Claudio Schuftan, Ho Chi Minh City

5. Charles Kayumba, Heifer International Country Director, Rwanda

Dear Moderator ,

The following are areas that I would contribute on focusing on rural women in sustainable development goals:

- 1) Access and control on productive resources especially land.
- 2) Access to credit, financial services and markets
- 3) Being part of value-chain actors (Active participation on value-chains)
- 4) Being part of decision making bodies.
- 5) Promotion of maternal health education
- 6) Prevention of gender based violence
- 7) Training on gender equality and rights.

Dr Charles KAYUMBA
Heifer International Country Director
Rwanda

6. Landesa, USA

Received via Twitter

Support for rural women in the new post 2015 development agenda should be given by advocating for equal rights to land for women and men. Resources can be found here: <http://www.landpost2015.landesda.org>

7. Markus Buerli, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Switzerland

Gender inequalities in both, urban and rural areas, are a major obstacle to sustainable development including poverty eradication, a healthy environment and economic growth because they lower women's and girls' opportunities to meaningful participation to social, political and economic life. In rural areas women and girls form the majority of those living in poverty, face greater likelihood of living with domestic violence and have unequal opportunity of access to resources and assets, including land tenure rights, and are more vulnerable to negative effects of fluctuations in food prices and food insecurity. These inequalities obstruct economic growth while perpetuating the unequal distribution of resources, rights and duties between men and women. **To achieve gender equality is thus key and must be placed at the center of the new framework, as well as mainstreamed across all goals.**

In consequence, Switzerland suggests a stand-alone goal titled Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women and Girls with three sub-goals, which are considered as key to overcoming structural impediments to gender equality. The stand-alone goal needs to go in conjunction with consequent mainstreaming of gender into all other relevant sustainable development goals. For the stand-alone goal three sub-goals are proposed:

1. Equal Economic Opportunities

- Ensure equal access to education
- Ensure equal access to employment and promote decent work
- Ensure equal access to and control over productive assets and resources
- Ensure equal social security and distribution of care work

2. Freedom from violence against women and girls

- Prevent violence against women and girls
- Ensure protection from and response to violence against women and girls
- Eliminate sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in conflicts & disasters
- Ensure access to justice and end impunity

3. Equal participation and leadership

- Ensure equal participation in political institutions
- Ensure equal participation in the private sector
- Ensure women's participation in peace and security
- Strengthen women's collective action

The complete Swiss position on Gender Equality can be downloaded under: www.post2015.ch/post2015/en/home/topics/gender.html

A contribution from the SDC's thematic networks on Gender and on Agriculture and Food Security, Bern, Switzerland

8. Nita Mawar, Ministry of Health and Family welfare, India

1. If you could make an intervention at the side event on rural women at the 8th session of the Open Working Group in New York, what would be its key message?

Visibility of rural women's work: work that is not recognized as there economic value of cash flow added eg work in own agricultural field , fetching water, wood etc where she spends adequate time

1. Rural women are often described as critical agents of change in discussions on sustainable development goals. To what extent would the achievement of food and nutrition security for rural women help accelerate sustainable development?

At present: The household responsibilities of women for family are prioritised as her husband, in-laws, children and then herself for health and nutrition. This needs to be changed along with the F & N security then only it can be made sustainable.

2. Of the many facts or stats recorded on rural women, which one do you consider to be the most revealing?

Research evidence based on systematic qualitative and quantitative methods are far more reliable . eg the ILO study on Rural women in UP, India measured women's roles by using time-use data in 4 rural sites of selected families every fortnight for one year and then measured it to understand the actual time contributed by women and men and the cost benefit analysis of work put in and benefits. Similar studies have been done in tribal areas where eg it is reported that a 7 year old girl child could not attend school as was 'responsible' for babysitting her younger sib as mother away for fetching wood, water for family. Mawar etal 1993 Social Change,India. Mawar, N., Jain, D.C., Verma, A., Kaushik, A., Karmahe, M. and Tiwary, R.S. Understanding the Employment, income in relation to the status of women: A case study of Gonds in M.P. Soc Change 1993, 23(4):87-94

Similarly many intervention projects have shown improvements in women's decision making when financial literacy was given to rural women in Maharashtra. (Gokhale and Lavlekar 2013 IFUW Conference, Istanbul).

Regards,

Dr Nita Mawar, M.Sc. Ph.D.
Scientist 'F'/Deputy Director-Senior Grade and HOD,
Social and Behavioural Research Division
National AIDS Research Institute (ICMR)
Department of Health Research, Min. of Health and Family welfare, Government of India

9. Henry Kizito, Good Neighbors Development Organisation, Uganda

First and foremost, I must salute FSN for coming up with this forum.

I wish to contribute on this topic that a woman is the cornerstone, the foundation, the custodian of social, cultural economic, spiritual and even political development. To achieve the development goals for rural women need favorable government policies that allows and supports their programmes.

Many scholars of women activism and development observe that women are viewed not only as development "ends" but also a means of reaching project goals. Therefore, investing in women women should be regarded as an effective use of scarce development resources. These actions should be guided by the basic principles of seeing women for what they are as economic and social agents, and not mere passive recipients of welfare.

For the development goals to be realized, this will require effective involvement of both women and men. For that case women are a vital force in national development . They support economic growth through agricultural and food production and play a vital role in the education and management of the community, as well as management of the environment.

We are all equal before God and have been gifted with the brains, intellect and wit such as; if women are given the opportunity, would enable them transform societies and make it a better place for all of us. Women have proved that they are lead managers within the households for providing food, nutrition, water, health, education among others. From that argument, governments should give support to rural women in terms of service as well as economic support because no nation can develop when a part of it is either marginalized or suffers from discrimination. And there is no greater injustice than that wholesomely inflicted on those that bring forth humanity. He who seeks to endanger, exploit, discriminate and oppress womanhood seeks to endanger all that dwell the earth, and there can be no valuable respect for a nation that does not treasure her mothers.

10. Manuel Castrillo, Proyecto Camino Verde, Costa Rica

1. If you could make an intervention at the side event on rural women at the 8th session of the Open Working Group in New York, what would be its key message?

Usually talk about rights, opportunities and facilities that should be, quite rightly to the women for access to resources and emponderarse in the agricultural economy of your family, community or country. in many cases, we start from the fact of discrimination and shortcomings to which they are subjected, in some cases more than others. refers to what must be given, which should not be questioned even, but we lose sight of the problem of the prevalence that male gender makes the power of decision and of allocation of things, only by the fact that he decides to. what I mean, is that part of the female gender, should be dealt with first at the origin of the current "machismo", whose ancient foundations are, the ballast which have largely prevented give the social position and women rights.

It is education, training or any method possible, trying to teach the men of the mental and structural changes needed to achieve to enhance the capacities of women and their full

participation in all human activities, not only in agriculture. In this specific case, we can see an improvement in the management and creativity for the confrontation of the food and nutritional problems facing us.

Manuel Castrillo
Proyecto Camino Verde

11. Thomas Sommerhalter, Concern Worldwide, Ireland

Point 1: First I would suggest processing of agriculture products. Women often have a weak position with regard to agriculture production, the main reason being land rights issues. But they often dominate the local processing of agriculture products. However when it comes to abscaling their business then there is little support and often bigger processing units are run and owned by men.

Second: women have a fairly strong role with regard to livestock, in some cases owning more livestock than men in particular smallstock. There again they have little support for their operations, are little considered by extension services, again something to look in.

12. Muhammad Ariful Haque, Kamfist Universe Engineering, Bangladesh (first contribution)

Women, Water and Family Farming

Beside significant role of women in Sanitation section, women are also participating in family farming sector. Year 2013 was declared as year of Family farming. I think family based vegetable gardening; indoor fish farming at Rooftop, Indoor, and Veranda in urban and rural area. Domestic wastage could be used there. This model will help influence kids to do in future large scale environment friendly activities.

In this context, I want to talk about keeping Tilapia fish at aquarium which can play positive role in economy of Bangladesh rather than amateur fishes in aquarium. Please see the attachments about this. We can campaign for to make a habit to producing fishes on rooftop tank, indoor tank/aquarium beside as usual fish production. If we able to do that I think within short time, it will be product of international trade from indoor aquarium.

Large scale activities of Rural Women

Rural women can contribute significantly to the domestic Biogas, solar panel, earth worm fertilizer, vegetable gardening, and etc activities. To support them more needed online based home economics teaching besides manual teaching. Financial institute can finance them by interest free loan or by CSR.

13. Botir Dosov, CACAARI, Uzbekistan

Dear Colleagues,

Undoubtedly, the role of Rural Women in a Sustainable Development is very critical. But, still they are in the rearguard of process of changes, though their commitments and responsibilities in

sustaining families are very high. Acknowledging this by society and development continuum is very important prerequisite for increasing the role and empowerment of women in development.

“In order to awaken the people, it is the women who have to be awakened. Once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves, the nation moves.” was saying Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s first Prime Minister.

1. If you could make an intervention at the side event on rural women at the 8th session of the Open Working Group in New York, what would be its key message?

There is diversity of issues: ideological, social, religious, ethnic, economic, cultural etc., and no approach could be universal to address them. Cases vary country by country. And one approach to empower women in sustainable development in a certain country or community that could be efficient might be not efficient in other country or case. There are range of issues and causes and consequences. For instance, female-headed households differ from male-headed ones by social and cultural aspects in different extent across many countries. Therefore, multi-stakeholders process of identifying, characterization and clustering of women-related issues across regions and countries would be a good step towards creating tools, formulating actions in case-by-case approach to empower rural women in sustainable development.

2. Rural women are often described as critical agents of change in discussions on sustainable development goals. To what extent would the achievement of food and nutrition security for rural women help accelerate sustainable development?

Considering that 43 percent of the agricultural labor force in developing countries (FAO, 2011), obtaining food and nutrition security for rural women definitely help accelerate sustainable development. Additionally, GDP growth in agriculture is four times more effective than GDP growth originating outside the sector in raising incomes of extremely poor people (FAO, World bank). While we talk ‘why food security and nutrition is essential’ first of all with think about the poor and vulnerable people, mostly rural, who lack the access to food and nutrition. On the other hand, in many developing countries smallholders produce the most portion of agricultural commodities. Women usually do unskilled work in agriculture, but still grassroots activities, which are first of all important for sustaining vital activities of their families and children. ‘De-facto’ women are critical contributors to sustainable development.

3. Of the many facts or stats recorded on rural women, which one do you consider to be the most revealing?

FAO report on the State of Food And Agriculture, Women in agriculture: Closing the gender gap for development. Rome, 2011. Increasing women’s access to the resources, services, innovation would increase productivity and generate gains in terms of agricultural production, food security, economic growth and social welfare.

14. Public Health Institute, USA

Our organization would like to post the following comment in the online discussion:

In many homes, and especially in rural communities, women form a vital link to food security for their families. Often they are responsible for agricultural cultivation, harvesting as well as food preparation. All women, regardless of income, should be able to prepare food safely without

exposure to toxic cooking smoke harmful to health. Exposure to partially combusted biofuels, as is common in most open cookstoves, can deprive women as well as those they live with of access to clean indoor air.

The Public Health Institute (PHI) generates and promotes research, leadership and partnerships to build capacity for strong public health policy, programs, systems and practices. PHI staff believe that health is a fundamental human right and that just societies ensure equitable health outcomes for everyone.

Jeff Meer
Special Advisor, Global Health Policy and Development
Public Health Institute
1201 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20004

15. Ana Carvajal, EduSaludMujer, Venezuela

[English translation]

Education of rural women is one of the key factors and ITCs can be used as well as other technologies. Information that can be offered is very broad, starting from health!

Primary attention on health for the community and of people who are in charge of the wellbeing of women!!

[Original in Spanish]

La educación en las mujeres del área rural es uno de los factores claves, para ello se pueden usar diferentes tecnologías, como las TIC. La información que se puede brindar es muy variada, se puede educar en salud !!

Atención primaria en salud dirigida a la comunidad y a las personas que se encargan del cuidado de las mujeres!!

Ana Carvajal
Caracas
Venezuela

16. Kiriaki Arali Orpinel Espino Tibúame, Asociación Civil, Mexico

[English translation]

1. If you could make an intervention at the side event on rural women at the 8th session of the Open Working Group in New York, what would be its key message?

Food Sovereignty will only take place with the HRBA (Human Rights Based Approach) and a research area should also be enabled since we cannot continue implementing a single proposal for all women as if we were all the same.

In Sierra Tarahumara women owned space over its territory, goats, drinking troughs and terminology is very rich and different from other women and other cultures.

Apart from addressing food sovereignty with the HRBA, INTERCULTURALITY should also be considered. Knowing - albeit slightly - the cultural particularities of every target territory is deemed necessary. Otherwise, the project and the investment will be fruitless.

2. Rural women are often described as critical agents of change in discussions on sustainable development goals. To what extent would the achievement of food and nutrition security for rural women help accelerate sustainable development?

Certainly women are still the family trustees. We are responsible for managing the resources of every household. We are also in charge of capitalising the harvest.

Women will always be innovative and will choose the best for their family. This is how we modernize our tradition, always active, continuously updated.

If nutrition actions or projects are proposed, the opinion of women should be considered first and foremost... In Sierra Tarahumara when men are asked about the needs of their families, they claim that larders, sheet roofs for their homes and better roads are required. And women? Women argue that having water near their home is necessary: to drink, to wash the clothes, to water the animals and to irrigate an orchard. The second request are chickpea, lentil, garden pea, broad bean, garden bean, maize seeds... but good seeds that can be used in another harvest, avoiding dependence on imported ones intended for one single sowing. Some of the women dream with apple, peach, pear or orange trees close to home. Women have a clear understanding of the requirements to improve the nutrition of themselves and their entire family. It is just a matter of asking the right question and listening to the answer.

3. Of the many facts or stats recorded on rural women, which one do you consider to be the most revealing?

We know nothing about their ethnic quality and cultures. In most reports data remains uniform.

Thanks for your attention.

Regards.

Kiriaki Orpinel Espino

[Original in Spanish]

1. Si pudiera hacer una intervención en el evento paralelo sobre la mujer rural en el 8º Grupo de Trabajo abierto en Nueva York, ¿de qué se trataría ?

La Soberanía Alimentaria solo se dará con el EBDH (Enfoque Basado en Derechos Humanos) y además debiera incluirse un espacio de investigación porque no podemos seguir implementando una sola propuesta para todas las mujeres como si iguales fuéramos.

En la Sierra Tarahumara el espacio femenino de propiedad sobre su territorio, chivas, aguajes, palabra es muy rico y diferente a otras mujeres, a otras culturas.

Además de hablar de soberanía alimentaria con EBDH es necesario agregar la INTERCULTURALIDAD. Es necesario conocer -aunque solo sea un poco- las particularidades culturales de cada territorio donde pensamos incidir, de otra manera será proyecto y dinero invertido en la corriente de un río.

2. Las mujeres rurales son a menudo descritas como importantes agentes de cambio en los debates sobre los objetivos de desarrollo sostenible. ¿En qué medida el logro de la seguridad alimentaria y nutricional de las mujeres rurales ayuda a acelerar el desarrollo sostenible?

Ciertamente que las mujeres seguimos siendo las economas de la familia, en nuestras manos se encuentra la administración de los recursos con que cuenta cada familia. En nuestras manos también se encuentra hacer rendir lo poco o mucho que se coseche.

Las mujeres siempre seremos innovadoras y tomaremos de lo que llegue a nuestras manos, lo mejor para nuestra familia y así es como vamos modernizando nuestra tradición, siempre activa, siempre actual.

Si se plantean acciones o proyectos de nutrición debiera tomarse en cuenta, primero y antes que nada, el qué dicen las mujeres?... En la Sierra Tarahumara cuando uno le pregunta a los hombres sobre las necesidades de su familia, de su pueblo, hablan de que necesitan despensas, lámina para los techos de sus hogares y arreglo de caminos, ¿las mujeres?, las mujeres hablan de tener agua cerca de su casa para beber, lavar ropa, beban los animales y regar un huerto... Para eso necesitan agua cerca de su casa. La segunda solicitud es semillas de garbanzo, lenteja, chícharo, haba, frijol, maíz... pero semillas buenas que se puedan juntar en la cosecha de nueva cuenta y no estar dependiendo de comprarlas fuera porque solo sirven para una siembra, algunas de ellas sueñan con arbolitos de manzana, durazno, peras o naranja cerca de casa. Las mujeres tienen claro que necesitan para mejorar la nutrición de ellas y toda su familia, solo es cuestión de hacer la pregunta correcta y escuchar la respuesta.

3. De los muchos datos o estadísticas registradas sobre las mujeres rurales, ¿cuál considera que es el más revelador?

Que no sabemos nada sobre su calidad étnica, que no sabemos nada sobre sus culturas, siguen siendo datos homogéneos en su mayoría de informes.

Gracias por su atención.

Saludos.

Kiriaki Orpinel Espino

17. Muhammad Ariful Haque, Kamfisht Universe Engineering, Bangladesh (second contribution)

With due respect, here are my thinking about Rural Women in sustainable Goals

Women, Water and Family Farming

Beside significant role of women in Sanitation section, women are also participating in family farming sector. Year 2013 was declared as year of Family farming. I think family based vegetable gardening; indoor fish farming at Rooftop, Indoor, and Veranda in urban and rural area. Domestic wastage could be used there. This model will help influence kids to do in future large scale environment friendly activities.

In this context, I want to talk about keeping Tilapia fish at aquarium which can play positive role in economy of Bangladesh rather than amateur fishes in aquarium. Please see the attachments about this. We can campaign for to make a habit to producing fishes on rooftop tank, indoor tank/aquarium beside as usual fish production. If we able to do that I think within short time, it will be product of international trade from indoor aquarium.

Large scale activities of Rural Women

Rural women can contribute significantly to the domestic Biogas, solar panel, earth worm fertilizer, vegetable gardening, and etc activities. To support them more needed online based home economics teaching besides manual teaching. Financial institute can finance them by interest free loan or by CSR.

Thank you

Muhammad Ariful Haque
CEO, Kamfisht Universe Engineering
Partner, Global Water Partnership
Partner, Global Soil Partnership of FAO, UN
Member, International Desalination Association

18. Maria Antip, International Fertilizer Industry Association, France

One key aspect of empowering rural women is ensuring that they have adequate access to affordable and appropriate inputs that enable them to grow the food to feed their families but also to become successful commercial farmers. The State of Food and Agriculture 2011 demonstrated that just giving women the same access as men to agricultural resources could increase production on women's farms in developing countries by 20 to 30 percent.

The fertilizer industry is weary of the need to bridge the gender yield gap and is looking for innovative solutions to facilitate women farmers' access to key inputs, in particular to fertilizers. One such example comes from Turkey, where a fertilizer company adjusted its fertilizer packaging to a lower weight so that women could more easily transport the bags uphill to reach their field.

In the Black Sea region, where tea plants are grown, the majority of agricultural workers are women. Tea plants are cultivated on the steep slopes of hills, up which it is very difficult to carry heavy items such as fertilizer bags. Fertilizer bags of 50 kilos were packaged and sold in that

region. In 2010, the producer acknowledged the difficulty this posed for women rural workers and designed a system for delivering CAN (calcium ammonium nitrate) and the most commonly used compound fertilizer (25.5.10) in 25 kg bags to help women farmers by lightening their load.

This change was not easy to implement. Everything from the design of the bag to the bag production line, as well as loading/unloading mechanisms, needed to be changed and required a significant investment. However, the initiative had an immediate quantifiable positive influence on women farmers' working conditions and productivity.

As research indicated, women farmers are less productive only because they don't have access to the same resources (capital, tools, products and services) as their male counterpart. Business solutions can be developed to create this access, in particular through innovative approaches tailored to address the specific needs of women farmers.

For this reason, the fertilizer industry is supportive of SDGs that have a built-in private sector contribution and that focus on facilitating smallholder agriculture, especially in the case of women who grow as much as 80 percent of the crops in developing areas.

19. Morgane Danielou, Farming First, France

I would like to draw your attention to an infographic co-created by FAO and Farming First entitled "The Female Face of Farming", which outlines the challenges and opportunities rural women farmers face.

You can view the interactive infographic here: http://www.farmingfirst.org/women_infographic/

Each graphic can be downloaded and embedded into presentations - colleagues are invited to share and use them, with a credit to FAO/Farming First.

Kind regards,

Morgane Danielou
Co-Chair of Farming First
Paris

20. Henry Kizito, Good Neighbors Development Organization, Uganda

Rural women play an important role of producing food not only for their households but also for the urban population through formal and informal trade. Therefore, agriculture is very vital to rural women because it acts as a stimulant for non-farm activities like trade, education, improved housing; improved water sources for human consumption and energy sources and use are all associated with poverty alleviation.

Rural women are mainly responsible for household food production. Men tend to focus on growing cash crops or migrate to towns to find paid work. The worsening of poverty and increase in the number of single parent families mainly due to HIV/AIDS epidemic is still a major handicap to

women mainstreaming in development activities. This implies that women must turn to income generating activities because their contribution to the national economy is enormous.

Women farmer institutions need to be formed because such outreach activities can increase the productivity of women in home based production, including agriculture and provision and use of household resources. Generally extension or outreach programs for women can correct factor market distortions, provide women with more equal agricultural and household technologies, and expand the effective supply of credit where they produce for market. Market opportunities can bring service providers and women farmer's together.

However, much as women are described as agents of change, they still find a lot of challenges that do not enable them achieve their development goals. They mostly have small-scale farms, use traditional techniques and technologies, depend on family labour, and have little or no capital to invest towards commercialization and most of their inputs (family land, labour and saved are monetized). For example in Uganda, there is no policy to ensure that small holder rural women farmer's use good quality seeds, planting, and stocking materials. Often times, the seeds supplied by the government programme of National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) to women are fake with low germination percentages, the agrochemical and livestock such as dairy, cows, piglets, and chicken are very low grade making loses for small holder women farmers. In addition, most rural women do not keep farm records which would provide information as a basis for planning and balancing their production and sales against their household food requirements.

Corruption is one of the greatest evils that have undermined rural women in accelerating development in Uganda. A desire for more power is responsible for the destruction of so many individual's moral fibres. That is why more African economies are poor because of high levels of corruption, where records indicate that men are corruptible than women. They (men) dominate African governments, and the solution therefore, is to encourage and campaign for more representation of women in African governments.

According to the World Bank Report on Women Development 2012, it observes that for very poor countries female labour for participation is high, reflecting a large labour-intensive agricultural sector and significant numbers of poor households. It is therefore necessary for governments to encourage rural women farmer's to Farmers Enterprise Groups which follow a clear and streamlined process that should enable integration of both "poor" and "rich" farmers. This could be coupled with arrangement of agricultural study visits, exhibition, workshops and seminars to facilitate informed farming practice and decision making in order to realize sustainable livelihood among women.

21. Themba Phiri, Jam International, South Africa

Hi

The role of women in agriculture cannot be over emphasized. Women play a pivotal role in addressing food security, nutrition and health programs at household level, however there is urgent need to start respecting women's views when it comes to seed selection, trials and demonstrations and giving them a voice in deciding what to market and not what to market. The rural urban migration has left many women tending the fields whilst their male counterparts are looking for paid employment in big cities, this alone speaks volume on how farming is in the hands of the rural women hence we need to empower this target group with all necessary skills of agriculture development.

Regard

Themba Phiri
Agricultural Technical Specialist

22. Mamadou Saliou Diallo, CAFT, Senegal

Mesdames et messieurs,

Je suis tout à fait d'accord avec vous sur votre vision sur la participation incontournable des femmes rurales dans le processus de participation à l'autosuffisance alimentaire en Afrique.

Si nous prenons le cas du Sénégal, les femmes travaillent beaucoup et gagnent peu de leur effort.

Si on leur donne les moyens de leur mission elles donneront des résultats inattendus dans ce domaine.

Il leur faut une formation, du matériel et un encadrement pour qu'elles y parviennent.

C'est pourquoi le gouvernement a lancé un nouveau projet sur l'agro-industrie pour permettre à ces dernières de participer de façons effectives pour la construction de l'objectif de l'atteinte de l'auto-suffisance alimentaire en 2015.

Nous avons un grand potentiel et des ressources humaines qui sont prêtes à s'engager.

Je peux donner les orientations dans ce sens pour mon pays le Sénégal.

Cordialement

Mr Mamadou Saliou Diallo

Président de l'association CAFT

Dakar -Sénégal

Programme de lutte contre l'ignorance et la pauvreté

23. Carsta Neuenroth, Bread for the World, Germany

Dear moderators,

below find the contribution of Bread for the World – Protestant Development Service to the online discussion.

1. **If you could make an intervention at the side event on rural women at the 8th session of the Open Working Group in New York, what would be its key message?**

The closing of gender gaps is a demand in its own right aimed at the realization of women's human rights. Women need access to education, health and employment in an environment free of violence. This is also the context in which women's role in agriculture, food security and sustainable development should be acknowledged and valued. Accordingly, women need access to and control over agricultural and productive resources, especially land as well as equal opportunities than men for political participation and decision making. Patriarchal power structures and patterns of thought and behavior need to be challenged. This is related to the necessity to re-validate the care work women provide for society and their contributions to livelihood and food security. Existing

gender roles and the traditional division of labor should not further be compounded. A transformative approach is needed to strengthen women's position in society.

2. Rural women are often described as critical agents of change in discussions on sustainable development goals. To what extent would the achievement of food and nutrition security for rural women help accelerate sustainable development?

Food and nutrition security for rural women (and girls) depends on the full realization of their human rights, including their right to adequate food and nutrition. Amongst other aspects, this includes:

- Women's freedom from direct and/or structural violence. Women suffering from violence cannot participate as autonomous actors in efforts to address hunger and food insecurity.
- An agro-ecological approach to farming, supporting smaller scaled and family farms. Since women have to take care of their families and put food on the table, they are interested in producing a variety of food which can be consumed by the family. Agro-ecological systems respond to women's priorities. With regard to improving existing farming practices, women need information, training and assistance. Training and assistance should be provided by female extension workers. Yet, agricultural extension is still a domain of men.
- Promotion of locally available and sustainable interventions such as breastfeeding, reproductive health and rights and the enhancement of and access to local and regional production based on agro-ecological principles as an alternative to medicalized nutrition interventions. Agriculture and production need to be linked to nutrition and health much more strongly than is presently the case.
- Support of local knowledge as promoted by IAASTD, the FAO Voluntary Guidelines to the Right to Food and food sovereignty movements in general. Women often are ignored, overlooked and not taken seriously by men when they refer to their local knowledge. Women are still seen by their male family members as well as by many development experts as farmwives rather than true farmers.
- Increasing autonomy and self determination of women and girls at all levels (local, national, international)

All the above issues need to be advanced through supportive policies at national and international level in favor of gender equality and food sovereignty in order to benefit both women and men. Local food systems shaped in the context of a rights based approach have the potential to foster greater economic autonomy, gender equality and social justice. Thus, food and nutrition security for rural women and girls and the realization of their right to adequate food and nutrition signifies that sustainable development has already been accelerated.

3. Of the many facts or stats recorded on rural women, which one do you consider to be the most revealing?

55 percent of the gains against hunger in developing countries between 1970 and 1995 were due to the improvement of women's situation within society.

The above information shows that there is no development, particularly no sustainable development, without the active participation of women. However, the following data shows how structurally embedded gender inequalities in agriculture prevent women farmers from using their competencies and developing their capacities:

Women comprise, on average, 43 percent of the agricultural labor force in developing countries, but own only 1 – 2 percent of the agricultural land.

If women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20 – 30 percent. This could raise total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5 – 4 percent, which in turn reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12 – 12 percent.

Globally, women comprise only 15 percent of all agricultural extension workers, and only 5 percent of extension services benefit women farmers.

With best regards,

Carsta Neuenroth
Policy Adviser Gender
Bread for the World – Protestant Development Service
Protestant Agency for Diakonia and Development
Germany

24. Kirunda David , Uganda

Received via FAO Facebook page

Women need empowerment by teaching them the skills of modern farming and subsidize them with agriculture facilities in their local communities as one of the measures taken to transform them from subsistence farming to commercial one.

25. James F. Albrecht International Police Association, United States of America

International Police Association Statement
Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition
Gender Equality, Rule of Law and Criminal Justice Administration
in Developing Nations
James F. Albrecht

Introduction

The issue of gender equality as it relates to rule of law and the administration of criminal justice may be addressed through a number of perspectives. First, female victims of crime, whether in urban or rural settings, must have their voices heard and not be denied the opportunity to report their victimization. Second, criminal justice agencies, such as the police and the courts, must ensure that females are properly represented within their ranks. And third, government officials must ensure that females are granted the same professional and promotional opportunities as their male counterparts.

Analysis & Recommendations: Women Issues in Criminal Justice Administration

When one thinks of the interaction of women and the policing profession, three main issues come to mind. What steps have law enforcement administrators taken to ensure that females are

properly represented in front line, supervisory, and executive positions? How do criminal justice officials interact and deal with female victims of crime and women offenders? And in developing countries, and more so in rural areas, have gender responsive measures been implemented to address the sensitive issues involving domestic violence, sexual abuse and harassment, and the ideological and cultural constraints on contact and interaction with females?

When put into historical context, these issues have only been recently addressed on the global level. Progress has been slow and one can only conclude that these endeavors are moving in the right direction. It would appear that efforts to incorporate “affirmative action” or the preferential hiring and promotion of females in criminal justice and policing positions have led to noticeable and constructive organizational changes. However, these efforts at creating a gender balanced work environment have received criticism from male colleagues and have resulted in predominantly unsuccessful challenges in the courts. Most police departments in the USA and the EU have shown considerable success and improvement in incorporating females into front line, investigatory, and supervisory policing positions. On the other hand, there has been only notable but slow progress in Caribbean nations; some advancement in Turkey; but little reported improvement in achieving a gender balance in policing agencies in South Korea. Similar conclusions can be made in relation to Pakistan as many studies have revealed that women police officers in a number of Pakistani cities report a certain level of job satisfaction, but many also have raised reservation in recommending a police position to female friends and family members. More disturbingly is the overwhelming perception that work place sexual harassment is not only pervasive in Pakistan, but goes unaddressed and unpunished.[1]

Of equal merit is that it is evident that domestic violence and criminality targeting females in Pakistan has not been properly documented and addressed. Research has shown that the male dominated police profession apparently views these issues as private ones and not suitable for criminal justice intervention. One main obstacle has been the lack of training provided to law enforcement personnel to comprehensively deal with these offenses and incidents. Due to this lack of appropriate attention by law enforcement organizations, many female victims and the neighborhood at large have engaged in vigilantism in Pakistan to seek revenge against predators that have targeted female community members. Clearly this situation has diminished the credibility of the police there, yet criminal justice and government administrators have made little effort to improve this dereliction of duty. [2]

There is a critical need for the international community, donor groups, and NGOs to continue to coordinate conferences and alliances to promote and to ensure progress as it relates to gender responsive policing and the advancement of women in the law enforcement and criminal justice arena.

As a result of comprehensive research, a number of findings and recommendations can be proposed to improve the conditions for female victims of crime and enhance the roles that women play in criminal justice administration:

- Although affirmative action and preferential hiring and promotion of women and minority groups in the criminal justice sector have received some scrutiny, these initiatives have proven to

be successful in increasing the number of females in law enforcement and other public service agencies.

- All training and in-service education for criminal justice agencies should incorporate gender related issues into their curricula.
- Law enforcement and criminal justice organizations must ensure that agency policy and procedure appropriately address and outline the necessary steps needed for dealing with female victims of crime.
- Federal guidelines and legislation must be created to mandate that sexual harassment and all forms of workplace discrimination, including engaging in retaliation for those who file complaints, are unacceptable and will lead to severe penalties, including the loss of position.
- Criminal justice and police organizations must make certain that all facilities have proper accommodations for both male and female employees and visitors.
- The international community, federal authorities, donor groups, and NGOs must continue to coordinate meetings and initiatives to address and enhance the special needs of female employees and women community members, particularly in certain geographical regions, e.g. the Middle East, south-east Asia, the Caribbean, Africa, South America, south-east Europe, and the Far East, where progress has been slow or negligible.
- In nations where ideological issues may deter the direct interaction of male police personnel and female crime victims, as in Pakistan and some surrounding countries, federal and regional criminal justice administrators should strongly consider creating female only police stations (or teams) to ensure equality and professionalism when interacting with all community members.

In conclusion, it cannot be emphasized enough how important it is that the voices of women in urban and rural communities be heard, recognized, and properly addressed. And just as relevant, criminal justice agencies, including the front line actor, the police, must reflect the gender and diversity of the communities in which they serve.

About the Author and the International Police Association: James F. Albrecht is a professor of criminal justice at the University of New Haven in the USA. He is a former police executive in New York City, who has also worked as a police advisor, trainer, and chief investigator for the United States Department of State, the United Nations, and the European Union. The International Police Association External Relations Commission provides law enforcement and rule of law policy experts to distinguished organizations such as the United Nations, Europol, Interpol, Organization of American States, among others. The goal of the International Police Association External Relations Commission is to improve the professionalism and effectiveness in the field of policing globally.

[1] The specific research works cited above are included in the Special Edition of the Pakistan Journal of Criminology that highlighted women issues in criminal justice and females working in police agencies.

[2] The Pakistan Society of Criminology has been highly proactive in analyzing and calling for drastic improvements for female victims of crime and women working within the criminal justice system within Pakistan and in surrounding countries.

26. Eileen Omosa University of Alberta, and Centre for Basic Research & Networking Africa, Canada

Hello,

The most revealing fact about rural women is that they are repositories of knowledge on farming. Land being one of the most important and sometimes the only asset of many rural families, many women have spent `entire lives' on land. Just like recognized scientists in modern laboratories, rural women are always carrying out experiments on the farm and publishing their findings in the next planting season or at the family kitchen. The difference is that the experiments of women family farm workers implemented in real life conditions. What more could society ask for?

Rural women have not only perfected the art of cultivating a variety of food crops to meet the food and nutritional needs of their families, but also to buffer the various crops from pests and vulnerabilities from changes in weather conditions. Majority of those women will provide details on reasons for inter-planting onions with other vegetables, reasons why once in a while she feeds her chicken on onion leaves, what type of beans do well when inter-cropped with maize, etc. Rural women as farmers and providers of food for families are best placed to tell relations between crops on the farm and the nutritional well-being of family members, the reason they grow a variety of vegetables, a variety of fruit trees on the farm, keep poultry and livestock on the limited land sizes. One way to support rural women in their farming and nutritional endeavours is to engage them in policy formulation discussions. One other lesson I learned from working and learning with rural land users is how fast it is to generate policy documents based on the reality in the farms. That policy makers save time and other resources when they start with rural level meetings where the `real players' will provide first-hand information on how current policies, for example on land tenure support or create problems in their farming tasks. For example, policy makers and scholars struggling with the finer details of a land tenure policy that provides access and control to women farmers could be surprised to hear from the women that the traditional land tenure systems were in their own sense private tenure and provided the required tenure security, compared to the current one of title registration which centralizes power over land with few individuals.

Achieving food and nutritional security goes back to the basics: when did `good food' change from being what families grow on family farms, to what is sold in stores? As I have always asked, what type of information makes a loving mother to sell her harvest of eggs and bananas at the local market to purchase bread and soda for her children? In other words, sustainable food and nutrition asks that `we' engage not only with policy makers, but with the private sector and their marketing arm.

My key message "ask members of the Open Working Group who have spent one year of their adult life in a rural area to stand up, tall"

27. Hans Friederich, International Network for Bamboo and Rattan, China

Dear Moderator

Please find below the contribution from INBAR

1. If you could make an intervention at the side event on rural women at the 8th session of the Open Working Group in New York, what would be its key message?

That bamboo can provide rural women with round the year subsistence and income generating opportunities, leading to greater security and resilience, for themselves, their children and their households.

The rural woman is the Queen of the Backyard, it is her territory. Without having to venture far from their home, away from their children, they can grow bamboo in homesteads, and produce a range of products, or just sell the bamboo for income. Bamboo enables reach to the widest range of market opportunities of any renewable natural resource. It grows on land not usable by food crops, and is drought tolerant. When all else fails, the bamboo will still be there. Bamboo is harvestable round the year; it can give a regular monthly income. The monthly pay check is the most valuable for all us urban folk. It can be so for rural women too.

2. Rural women are often described as critical agents of change in discussions on sustainable development goals. To what extent would the achievement of food and nutrition security for rural women help accelerate sustainable development?

Rural women have proven to be the best savers. They are very large in number. Drops of money do make buckets of investible capital. The achievement of food and nutrition security would make much of the savings available for productive investments rather than consumption. In Rajasthan, India, several thousand women have invested in a biomass briquette company. This has helped valorise the waste non-fodder biomass that is commonly burnt and raised their annual income by 30%.

3. Of the many facts or stats recorded on rural women, which one do you consider to be the most revealing?

That 500 million women around the world in 500 million poor rural households cook food for their families twice a day, each of the 365 days in a year, using firewood.

Firewood is renewable biomass, nearly all of which is sequestered CO₂, one that should be celebrated rather than shunned. These 500 million women can be at the forefront of the fight to reduce global warming by fixing more of the CO₂. INBAR has made the 2x365 times/year firewood cooking process an income generating one through valorising the waste charcoal and incentivising efficient burning. The waste charcoal so produced is 3x the global commercial charcoal production. In Tanzania, income of single mothers has risen 3-fold through this process, allowing for them to independently provide for their children. Bamboo is the most productive and renewable biomass in

the world, and can help. It is used as firewood. Women in Rajasthan, India, are now incentivised enough to plant productive bamboos in their homesteads and farm bunds. Soon it will be adequate to meet their annual firewood needs. Not only will deforestation for firewood get reduced, but there will be reforestation and ecosystem improvement too. This is a market driven sustainable development system with no subsidies and a good ROI.

Hans Friederich

Director-General, International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR) 8, Futong Dong Da Jie, Wangjing, Chaoyang District P. O. Box 100102-86, Beijing 100102, P. R. China

Website: www.inbar.int

28. Santosh Kumar Mishra, Population Education Resource Centre (PERC), India

Note: Prepared for contribution to side-event [**to be hosted by:** Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), & World Food Programme (WFP)] focusing on rural women in an SDG Framework at the Eighth session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

1. If you could make an intervention at the side event on rural women at the 8th session of the Open Working Group in New York, what would be its key message?

Market economy trends in the new era of globalization have widened the gap between education and technology opportunities for men and women. Women are a great human resource and their role in the society is vital for its progress. The involvement and engagement of women in the present day information society on an equal footing with men would directly contribute to improving the livelihood of people, making it more sustainable and thereby promoting the social and economic advancement of societies.

Science and technology brings economic growth and well-being to people. Undoubtedly, science and technology can be vastly enriched through women's involvement, which closely links to the empowerment of women through science and technology. It is not the concern of one nation only, but there are many players and stakeholders in the aim to reach this millennium goal. Women empowerment may be through innovative scientific activities, integrating action oriented literacy, sound micro-finance and micro-enterprise training as well as an understanding of legal rights and advocacy. Apart from the efforts of the United Nations family of organizations, multilateral bodies and civil society, the positive role of women also depends on the supportive attitudes of their local family unit, the local community in each village and town.

2. Rural women are often described as critical agents of change in discussions on sustainable development goals. To what extent would the achievement of food and nutrition security for rural women help accelerate sustainable development?

Rural women are key agents for development. They play a catalytic role towards achievement of transformational economic, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development. But limited access to credit, health care and education are among the many challenges they face. These are further aggravated by the global food and economic crises and climate change. Empowering them is essential, not only for the well-being of individuals, families and rural communities, but also for overall economic productivity, given women's large presence in the agricultural workforce worldwide.

Given equal resources, women could contribute much more. If women farmers (43 per cent of the agricultural labor force in developing countries) had the same access as men, agricultural output in 34 developing countries would rise by an estimated average of up to 4 per cent. This could reduce the number of undernourished people in those countries by as much as 17 per cent, translating to up to 150 million fewer hungry people.

3. Of the many facts or stats recorded on rural women, which one do you consider to be the most revealing?

The main problems of rural women can be divided into four main categories economic, social, family level and individual. Most of the problems are connected to the social and political change and transition taking place in the countries. For many rural women and families, the transition from one system to another has meant increased economic problems and a loss of paid labor and unemployment. In private agriculture the main problem is low income levels. For many rural women the economic problem is dependence on their husband's income.

Dr. Santosh Kumar Mishra (Ph. D.)
Technical Assistant,
Population Education Resource Centre (PERC),
Department of Continuing and Adult Education and Extension Work,
S. N. D. T. Women's University,
India

29. Nuhu Danboyi, M4D, Nigeria

Dear,

Taking this from from bottom up this time, i think the result can never be far-fetched. Issues of food security and nutrition, having women involved is a discussion to be looked at from the community stand point. It is common in most of our communities that women have poor or no access to most of the good things of life, they are still burdened by stereo types while cash crops are synonymous to men.

The innovative way to get this women involved is to try get them organised, create the air for them where they can gather voices that can discuss stories of how they are catalyst of change. The entire SDG framework could be designed in such a way as to begin to involve women, an all inclusive approach, in policy formulation that bothers on food security and nutrition. The targets should be that the capacity of rural women is build to meet the constant challenges that comes with newer Agricultural practices around the globe. Women should be supported to start engaging with policy makers and service providers at the grassroot as to be included in the mainstream of decision making, where they can have talks on their livelihoods as individuals not as appendages to some dictatorial concensus.

This will ensure a cataclysmic paradigm shift from a one sided bulk that has made growth stunted, especially in the developing countries.

30. Senait Regassa, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Ethiopia

I think the need for finding solutions for gender inequality is understood by all development practitioners and I commend the initiative for this online discussion.

The contribution I would like to make with regard to the topic of discussion is that one should not consider rural women as one homogenous group that faces similar challenges and discrimination. I am saying this because a preliminary analysis of data collected in a field assessment in a couple of pocket areas in Ethiopia in 2010 showed that there is difference in access to and control over resources and information between women heads of households and women in male headed households, the latter group being better off. My suggestion is to do detailed analysis to understand variation among rural women in order to be able to come up with ways of addressing the challenges faced by the different groups.

Senait Regassa
National Program Officer
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Ethiopia

31. Amin Al-Hakimi, Yemeni Association for Sustainable Agriculture Development, Yemen

Thank you very much for your efforts in food security issues and the role of rural women, but during the 30 years of my carrier in agriculture research, development, education I do not find that there are slight progress in supporting the great works conducting by rural women in food security behind other roles in protecting natural resources. There are no lessons learning and adaption from the previous succeed projects conducted in the same country or from others countries which have the same intensity of needs and problems of food in security?? Why also we separated food security and drinking water?

Local food system,

I gave these examples about Yemen, Now they prepare for conducting the new project of GFSP which will be funded by world bank during the few months this year, where i think the role of rural women are neglected, and country like Yemen more than 70% of women lives in rural areas and their responsible for produces their food and water which I prefer if the most of this project should planned to support the role of producers rural women in rural areas and their contributions in food security, and review the initiatives done before and experiences in this field.

32. Gomathy Venkateswar , India

Dear Friends,

Last December on a visit to a village in Pune (State of Maharashtra) in India, I found all along both sides of the highway, in front of small trestle tables women selling organically home grown turmeric powder an essential ingredient in Indian cooking. It also has great anti-septic properties,

and has been patented by the Indian government as an Indian commodity, where it is used for cosmetics and medicinal ointments. I stopped to buy the neatly packaged turmeric powder, which grows from a rhizome, and is easily grown in a small patch of earth.

This is truly a sustainable income generating activity, which probably many rural women do have access to, but needs promotion for marketing. In South India similarly, the Tamarind Tree that yields another sour, tangy fruit whose pulp extract is extensively used in Indian cuisine, grows profusely along highways as Avenue trees as it provides a large leafy canopy that provides shade in the scorching heat of summer, is also used to market its product. However this occupation of picking and processing it is taken over by government contractors and middlemen. If this could be given over to women in the rural areas after it has been picked from the trees, the labour that is involved in shelling the raw fruit and then drying it in the sun after de-seeding it, can be a sole women's activity. It would gain a big income for them.

Our country has a great source of products from forests and its bio-diversity of trees and plants which are very often medicinal in its content. If rural and tribal women whose knowledge of these trees and plants is handed down to them from generation to generation, what a great boost to their lives.

Gomathy Venkateswar.

Member on IFUW Committee on Fellowships.

Member on the Project Grants Committee of the VGIF.

Member of Soroptimist International of South Kolkata.

INDIA

33. Paul Rigterink, Potomac Technical Advisors, United States of America

1. If you had made an intervention at the side event on rural women at the 8th session of the Open Working Group in New York, what would have been its key message?

The FAO needs to create "demonstration farms" in various rural regions and climatic zones that will accelerate sustainable development for rural women. For example, suppose the FAO started a "demonstration farm" on one hectare of tropical/arid land to show poor rural women, who in the past earned \$2/day, how to make a better living. How much money would the FAO spend on the following:

- Cost of borrowing money
- Land rental
- Land clearing
- Land tillage
- Farm equipment
- Fencing
- Water use
- Irrigation equipment

- Seeds and nursery stock
- Fertilizer
- Pest control
- Disease control
- Fungicides
- Packaging the products
- Marketing the products
- Transport
- Farm insurance

Given the list above, what investments would the FAO expect a rural woman, who earned \$2/day in the past, to invest in her farm? What investments made by the FAO "demonstration farm" would not be made by a poor woman farmer? How does the FAO make their "demonstration farm" more realistic to the needs of a poor rural woman farmer? Based on FAO estimates and practical experience in different regions, how much of a microloan would rural women need in order to substantially achieve food and nutrition security in the future?

34. Cesarie Kantarama, Rwanda received through Katy Lee, International Agri-Food Network, Italy

Please accept the contribution below from Cesarie Kantarama, a woman farmer from Rwanda and part of the Eastern Africa Farmers' Federation

Women play a huge role in rural and urban economies. The majority of them are the rural women that their participation in sustainable development is significant. So, investing in rural women is one of the solutions for promoting food security, fighting against poverty and promoting well being.

As a contribution of this topic some points are proposed:

- Promoting education of girls and women
- Promotion of equal opportunity of management to resources, assets and land tenure rights
- Promotion of participation in private sector
- Promoting the rural entrepreneurship
- Empowering women's collective activities
- Prevent violence against women
- Training on agriculture techniques and environment protection
- Training on marketing
- Promotion of smalls rural processing unit
- Access to credit and saving
- Improving women participation in value chain system
- Infrastructure to impact positively the work of rural females (transport , safe water, day nursery)
- Rural women international day shall be valorized by all level .

KANTARAMA CESARIE
RWANDA

35. Rose Akak, Uganda National Farmers' Federation, Rwanda received through Katy Lee, International Agri-Food Network, Italy

Please accept the contribution below from **Rose Akaki**, a smallholder farmer and member of **Uganda National Farmers' Federation**.

We are at the a time when food security and hunger eradication are taking the centre stage in as far as we reflect on the challenges we are bound to face when the world's population reaches 9.5 billion in 2015. Where will more food that is meant to feed the world come from, considering that land size will remain constant, people the world over are already experiencing the effects of climate change; and that women farmers are at the centre of food production?

My area of focus will be on the women farmers of Uganda; the challenges they face and how these challenges can be addressed to enable these women feed the growing population.

The Challenges

(i) In Uganda, 80% of the farmers are women. Of this, 90% are rural smallholder farmers who produce about 60% of the food that feeds the country. However, these women own only 1% of the land they use for farming. This is mainly acquired through purchase. The rest of the land is under the control of the men as land ownership in Uganda is a preserve of men and control over what is planted on such land is dictated by them. For instance, it is sad to note that in most cases they usually use such land for growing tobacco which does not contribute to sustaining food security. This implies that the size of land women use for agriculture is very limited. Whatever is produced on such land is limited to household consumption. Besides this land is over-used and has low fertility.

(ii) Out of every 100 workers in a farm in Uganda, 75 are women (Government of Uganda Gender and Productivity Survey 2011). 43% of this massive labour force is not paid and provide labour in their family farms. Considering that a woman has other roles she plays in a home and that agriculture is labour intensive, and requires 4-5 hours of a woman's working time, it is evident that her productive time will have been reduced because her time for care work competes with that for agriculture. This implies that if a woman is to produce food that will sustain the world population, then her means for food productivity has to be improved so that she can produce for the household and the market.

(iii) Limited accessibility to farm inputs and technology such as fertilizers, improved seeds, agro chemicals, ox ploughs and tractors. Tractors as well as animal drawn ploughs are still in limited supply. As a result, women farmers continue to open land using the hand hoe, a factor responsible for the small scale production and delayed planting. Besides, a majority of the smallholder women farmers can hardly afford improved seeds, planting and stocking materials, agro-chemicals and fertilizers due to the high prices. Even the distribution of the agricultural inputs suppliers is still limited and the women farmers find it tiresome to travel long distances to buy the improved inputs.

(iv) Lack of affordable Farm Credit. Up to now, very few farmers are accessing affordable Farm Credit. The interest rates remain high thereby preventing farmers from borrowing. The situation is worse with women rural farmers. In Uganda, only 10% of the women farmers have access to grants offered to farmers by government. The condition to accessing this grant is through groups. The criteria for membership in a group may also make some women fail to join such groups.

(v) Poor marketing system. Smallholder women farmers produce and market as individuals. As a result they fall prey to the middle persons as they have no bargaining power. Secondly, in Uganda, access to market is basically limited to men and yet whatever little a woman earns from the proceeds of the farm, she will use it to improve on the livelihood of her family. On the contrary, most rural men would squander theirs on drinks.

(vi) Limited on-farm value addition. Majority of the womenfarmers continue to sell their produce without any value addition. This is the major cause of the low earnings they get from production.

(vii) Ineffective agricultural advisory/ extension services. This impact on productivity of the land in use. Access to agricultural information is very vital. A farmer irrespective of gender must get the knowledge and skills to enable them improve on their farming practices with a view to increasing food production and income to their families. This area is worsened by the fact that there are few trained women agriculture advisory and extension workers. Women feel they can easily access the services of fellow women than men.

(viii) Effects of Climate Change. The effects of Climate Change have been experienced in different forms, the worst being the frequent droughts which seriously affect both crop and animal production. This is of course worsened by the fact that most of the smallholders entirely depend on weather for production. The rain patterns have changed and left the rural farmer who reads the sky for signs of rain confused. A lack of an effective weather forecast system makes it difficult for such farmer to plant their crops at the right time.

Way forward

In order to enhance women smallholder farmers' efforts to food security and sustainability, governments, National farmer organizations, financial services providers, civil society organizations and other relevant bodies should work in collaboration and ensure the following are done:

(i) **Provision of good quality seeds and planting materials.** Support should be extended to the seed companies to enable them multiply adequate quantities of seed which seed should be distributed by the companies. This will help to ensure that farmers get good quality seed.

(ii) **Promotion of fertilizer use in areas with low soil fertility.** Deliberate efforts should be made to promote fertilizer use by farmers in such areas. Also efforts should be made to repack the fertilizers in quantities that suit small holder farmers and are hence affordable. Packages of 50 kgs at over Shs.120, 000 are not favorable to a smallholder farmer.

(iii) **Enhancing mechanization.** Individual farmers as well as farmer groups that are eager to procure tractors should get government support to acquire them. This will go a long way in alleviating the labour shortages for land preparation and will improve on women's productivity time since they will make use of less energy but produce more for home consumption and for the market.

(iv) **Promotion of value addition.** Appropriate arrangements should be put in place to enable organized farmer groups to access the agro-processing funds designated for small scale farmers. Maize Shellers, Rice Hullers and Cassava Mills should be given priority.

(v) **Climate Change mitigation and adaptation.** Special attention needs to be put to mitigating the bad effects of Climate Change and addressing all possible adaptation measures. Water harvesting techniques should be given emphasis and sizeable investment should be put into promoting irrigation.

(vi) **Improvement in the marketing system.** Farmers should be encouraged and supported to market collectively. Those that belong to groups (SACCOs) should be supported to put up good storage facilities through which they can link up to the Warehouse Receipt Systems.

(i) **Animal diseases control.** Farmer's ability to control animal diseases is still limited by hindrances to access drugs such as de-wormers, acaricides and vaccines. Some of the drugs are either not readily available within the vicinity of the farmers or they are too expensive. Support should be extended to the local stockists and the Veterinary Staff in the field facilitated to respond to the farmer's needs.

All these interventions need concerted efforts with the different actors playing certain roles, especially Governments, Farmers' Organizations and civil society organizations. These can play different but complimentary roles as follows;

Governments;

- Put in place enabling policies that ensure sustained agricultural production.
- Ensure policy implementation. One of the key challenges is that there are so many good policies especially in Uganda which are not implemented particularly those that target women's access to land.
- Increase budgetary allocation to the agricultural sector to support very important components like agricultural research.
- Provide the necessary infrastructure e.g. roads, cold chain, etc.
- Provide extension services to the farmers through local governments.
- Provide meteorological information to farmers so that they can plan their farming activities better. This can be through local radio stations (FM channels) or through short message texts (SMS).

Farmer Organisations

- Monitoring the implementation of the different government policies and giving feedback to government
- Building capacity of farmers/members through training in areas where there are gaps in practice
- Providing extension services to compliment government services since they do not reach everywhere.
- Mobilize farmers for different things like bulk marketing.
- Provision of market information to farmers/ members (information dissemination)

Civil Society organizations

- Lobbying and advocating for farmer friendly policies (act as a mouth piece of the otherwise voiceless women farmers).
- Sensitizing the community on the rights of men and women to own and use land for food production.

36. Barack Kinanga, Save the Children UK, Sudan

Received through LinkedIn

The level of poverty, social and economic disruption of post conflict environment affects men and women in different ways. There a larger proportion of women headed households because men are active combatants in the war and therefore women take larger roles in bringing up the families. Substantial resources must be invested on women . Although women are more vulnerable to the effects of conflict, their activities are aimed at improvements of the well being of their families. Its often not a wrong choice to make women an entry point of rural development.

37. Miren Larrea, Foro Rural Mundial -FRM, Spain

Estimadas amigas y amigos del FSN, me gustaría compartir con ustedes unas informaciones recopiladas de documentos de la FAO, del Consejo de Derechos Humanos y del Relator Especial para el Derecho a la Alimentación.

El discurso sobre la importancia de la mujer y concretamente de la mujer agricultora en el desarrollo sostenible está muy avanzado. Me pregunto porqué la práctica queda tan lejos de la teoría.

Las mujeres agricultoras responden a la doble jornada laboral de cada día (en el hogar y en el campo) con el lastre de las múltiples discriminaciones a las que deben hacer frente, entre ellos el hambre. A pesar de ello, son responsables de la producción de al menos la mitad de los cultivos alimentarios. Ellas son la clave para enfrentar eficazmente el hambre y la pobreza en el mundo.

Por ello es crucial identificar y dignificar su rol como agentes prioritarios para el cambio de rumbo de las políticas y acciones a favor de un desarrollo sostenible e integrador del sistema alimentario mundial.

Según De Schutter, la discriminación de la mujer agricultora afecta directamente el derecho de las mujeres y las niñas a la alimentación pero también incide en el derecho a la alimentación del resto de la población de tres maneras.

En primer lugar, la discriminación que sufren las mujeres embarazadas y las mujeres en edad de procrear tiene consecuencias intergeneracionales. La subnutrición materno infantil menoscaba la capacidad de aprendizaje de los niños, de modo que condiciona su proyección profesional en la edad adulta. La desventaja de haber tenido una alimentación deficiente en el vientre materno o la primera infancia se transmite además de una generación a la siguiente: los hijos de las mujeres mal alimentadas en la primera infancia suelen tener bajo peso al nacer

En segundo lugar, las mujeres, al desempeñar el papel que la sociedad les asigna y al no tener sino un escaso poder de negociación en el hogar, se ven en una situación en que no pueden decidir a qué prioridades destinar el presupuesto familiar. Ahora bien, los hombres no son suficientemente conscientes de la importancia de cuidar a los niños y en particular de satisfacer sus necesidades en materia de nutrición. Algunas investigaciones revelan que las posibilidades de supervivencia de un niño se incrementan en un 20% cuando el control del presupuesto familiar está en manos de la madre.

En tercer lugar, la discriminación contra las mujeres en el ámbito de la producción de alimentos no solo atenta contra sus derechos, sino que tiene consecuencias que afectan a toda la sociedad, porque causa considerables pérdidas de productividad. El acceso a recursos productivos como la tierra, los insumos, la tecnología y los servicios es un factor determinante para explicar las diferencias de rendimiento de las explotaciones agrícolas según que estén en manos de hombres o de mujeres; también hay que tener en cuenta la mayor capacidad que tienen los hombres de hacer trabajar a sus familiares (no remunerados) o a otros miembros de la comunidad. Los datos indican que en los países en que las mujeres no tienen derecho de propiedad sobre la tierra o no tienen acceso al crédito el porcentaje de niños mal nutridos es un 60% y un 85% mayor, respectivamente.

Además, según un informe reciente, el 79% de los estudios existentes sobre la utilización de fertilizantes, variedades de semillas, herramientas y plaguicidas llegan a la conclusión de que los hombres tienen mayor acceso a esos insumos. De un estudio realizado en Burkina Faso se desprende que, en un mismo hogar, la productividad de las parcelas de las mujeres era un 30% más baja que la de los hombres, porque en estas se utilizaban más mano de obra y más fertilizantes. Ahora bien, también se ha constatado que en igualdad de condiciones respecto del acceso a insumos, la productividad de hombres y mujeres es prácticamente igual.

Tal como recoge un reciente informe de la FAO, si las mujeres tuvieran el mismo acceso a los recursos productivos que los hombres, el número de personas hambrientas en el mundo se reduciría entre un 12% y un 17%.

Recomendaciones

La emancipación de la mujer debería protagonizar toda estrategia de desarrollo rural y agrario sostenible. La obligación de los Estados de eliminar todas las disposiciones discriminatorias de la legislación y luchar contra la discriminación que se origina en las normas sociales y culturales es una obligación ineludible que debe cumplirse sin demora.

Los Estados deben: a) hacer las inversiones necesarias para aligerar la carga de trabajo doméstico que soportan actualmente las mujeres; b) reconocer la necesidad de tener en cuenta las restricciones específicas de tiempo y movilidad que tienen las mujeres a consecuencia de su papel en la economía "asistencial", y al mismo tiempo redistribuir las funciones de los géneros según un enfoque transformador del empleo y la protección social; c) incorporar una perspectiva de género en todas las leyes, políticas y programas creando, cuando proceda, incentivos que recompensen a aquellas administraciones públicas que fijen y alcancen objetivos en la materia; d) adoptar estrategias multisectoriales y plurianuales tendentes a lograr la plena igualdad para las mujeres, bajo la supervisión de un órgano independiente que haga el seguimiento de los avances, sobre la base de datos desglosados por género en todas las esferas relacionadas con el logro de la seguridad alimentaria.

La participación de las mujeres en la formulación, la ejecución y la evaluación de todas esas políticas podría transformar profundamente nuestro concepto mismo del papel de la agricultura

familiar. La participación es la única garantía de que las mujeres tengan verdaderas posibilidades de elegir.

El fortalecimiento de las cooperativas de mujeres o el fomento de las actividades agrícolas de grupos de mujeres también son importantes por el mismo motivo. Las mujeres no solo deben poder superar los obstáculos que les impiden ser igual de productivas que los hombres, sino que también deben tener la posibilidad de redefinir las prioridades del sistema de agricultura a pequeña escala, del que se están convirtiendo en protagonistas.

“La equidad de género es más que un objetivo en sí mismo. Es una precondition para responder al reto de la pobreza, promover el desarrollo sostenible y edificar una gobernanza adecuada”. Kofi Annan

Fuentes: FAO, Consejo de DDHH y Documentos del Relator Especial para el Derecho a la Alimentación.

¿A qué estamos esperando?
Saludos,

Miren Larrea

38. Raissa Muhutdinova, Global Civil Initiatives, Inc., Kyrgyzstan

Dear Madam/Sir,

In response to the on-going discussion on the role of rural women in sustainable development goals, I would like to add a few insights from Kyrgyzstan.

Despite the fact that rural women in Kyrgyzstan experience numerous hardships affecting their well-being, such as housekeeping pressures, difficulty of educating, feeding and clothing children or inadequate housing, they nevertheless have great potential to assume leading roles in projects that create jobs for women, raise rural earnings and ensure food security. It is because of the fact that rural Kyrgyz women have proper education; they are more experienced and skillful in their home management, more prudent and thrifty in their spending, more practical in identification of opportunities for work, survival and income generation. To be empowered for these roles, the rural women need prompt and effective actions to ensure financial, material and institutional support for their business endeavors; access to subsidies and easy loans, extensive micro-lending and programs that teach basic business skills. With more targeted and carefully selected attention from the government and international organizations, including UN, working on development programs, the rural Kyrgyz women might be empowered enough to become real agents of change and not only lift themselves out of poverty, but contribute greatly to the overall economic development of the country.

Raissa Muhutdinova,
Global Civil Initiatives, Inc.
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

39. Gomathy Venkateswar , India

As to day is the last date for contribution to the online sessions, I would also emphasize that wherever Women are working in Rural Farming Practices, The Produce from these areas MUST AT ALL LEVELS COME UNDER THE FAIR TRADE PRACTICES BOARD.

Consumers too must become aware that to improve the status of Women across the Rural World, Governments must institute Fair Trade Markets, and Consumers must be educated to buy wherethese products come from with the Sweat and labour of Women's Work, and they must benefit directly from Fair Trade markets.

40. Gomathy Venkateswar , India

Hello, Moderator, Reader-Participants,

I lived for 5 years in Nepal as Head of a residential school located in total rural surroundings, where the community worked all year around in raising food crops from the terraced fields around. It was only women who were seen working in

the fields through the changes of the season. Only at Harvest time would the men appear, perhaps because the load of work was heavier and they did bring some mechanized tools to implement the work, as rice or wheat that had ripened on the stalk had to be cut within a short span of a few days.

Back breaking work, and the payment to these women for the year long work in these patriarchal and feudal societies was just a bag of the cereal they grew and harvested. They knew no better, Tradition carried on in these regions, and with the political upheaval that has taken place in the past 15 years when Monarchy has been overthrown and a democratic Republic has been set up as the New Nation of Nepal, whether these Rural women farmers can expect a Better Deal in the new government set up?

Mrs Gomathy Venkateswar

41. Anna Antwi, GD Resource Center (development NGO), Ghana

Focusing on Rural Women in a Sustainable Development

1.If you could make an intervention at the side event on rural women at the 8th session of the Open Working Group in New York, what would be its key message?

- Improving livelihood security of women – ie enhancing women’s economic empowerment (farm and non-farm income generating activities), and providing capacity development for women’s socio-economic empowerment to be engaged in decision making processes of their spaces (either at household or community levels)
- Providing Agricultural extension and advisory services: to target women and help to increase production, store, process and prepare nutritious foods for the family, and to enhance their wellbeing ie improve food and nutrition security
- Providing rural infrastructure and service to women – to ease women’s household and community burden (pipe borne water/ water points for women to readily fetch water, health centers with health workers, schools with teachers, good roads and market access, industries to help process foods to ensure long shelf lives

2. Rural women are often described as critical agents of change in discussions on sustainable development goals. To what extent would the achievement of food and nutrition security for rural women help accelerate sustainable development?

Rural women are basically into production and feeding of the household in addition to their other unpaid jobs. Increasing knowledge in food production, feeding, nutritional status improvement (including good hygienic environment and good water sources all of which contribute to nutrition) will enhance the women's capacity to deliver. It will free more time for women to engage in other activities like being involved in political leadership positions, more time for leisure and therefore quality time for the family (the unit of society)

3. Of the many facts or stats recorded on rural women, which one do you consider to be the most revealing?

Women producing to feed the family yet they are most under-nourished. Women doing most of farm work yet under-paid, and unrecognized. Women doing so much for society yet with little education and wealth.

Women should have access to secured land and agricultural extension and advisory services to enable them deliver. Special efforts should be made to recognize and appreciate women's efforts. In this year of family farming more has to be done to highlight and appreciate the Rural Women's efforts to feed the World.

Dr. Anna Antwi, Development Consultant, Ghana

42. Jacqueline Fletcher, France

Women in rural areas in developing countries produce about 60% of household food. Therefore, our projects should be addressing them in order to enhance sustainability. But equally we should be working with their knowledge of traditional crops specific to that region, and, of course, women are traditionally the seed savers, have knowledge of greens (usually considered weeds by Western agronomists and agribusinesses).

Women already know about the biodiversity of their gardens and farms, and they know the nutritional and medicinal properties of those greens (aka weeds) that grow between the staple crops and harvest them for consumption.

Women know about the consequences of de-forestation. It was rural women in Ghana who first alerted Wangari Maathai about the knock-on effects of de-forestation on their ability to keep their families together, this initiated the Green Belt movement.

Of course, women in third-world countries have many responsibilities with few rewards or respect for their efforts. Education is an important factor, even learning to swim. When countries are flooded as a result of hurricanes, 5 times more women drown because they haven't learned to swim. So, educated women on a variety of pragmatic levels is important.

The Barefoot College in India should be an example of training women and emancipating them from their second class status. The College, which operates under the slogan 'train a grandmother and change the world' has shown the way forward and the advantages of training even illiterate women in basic solar technology. For example, assembling solar lamps and cookers. These women then go back to their villages and train other women. Mostly, according to Bunker Roy, founder and spokesperson for the project, the self-esteem and respect for women rises incrementally as they take on roles as educator and improve local conditions.

The most effective method of small-scale farming is permaculture. It is effective because it mimics a natural eco-system with all elements being multi-functional and mutually supportive exactly in the way a natural forest (the most natural and effective eco-system) would be. These eco-system farming principles can be adapted to any climate or locality, focusing mainly on crops that are natural to that region and climate, but equally focus on maintaining the hydrological cycle, improving the soil micro-organisms and humus content, keeping rainwater in the soil, maintaining biodiversity and, therefore, on combatting desertification and regenerating land that has already been seriously degraded by drought, loss of top soil, and depletion of soil micro-organisms due to monoculture production and use of chemicals.

Bill Mollison, the founder of the permaculture movement has already set up several permaculture projects in African and at least one in India. The idea is to teach the principles to locals who understand local resources and will adapt the principles to regenerate the land. The individuals trained then go on to train others. In some cases schools have set up permaculture courses so that children can go home and teach their parents. This is spreading rapidly, but is so far run without funding and mostly through donations and volunteers.

It seems evident that permaculture could be directed to women in rural areas in developing countries, asking them what is wrong and what they think they need before training them in permaculture principles. We should have a programme of funding for these projects, which should remain small in scale in order to focus on women and their needs and on local conditions.

Some projects already exist run by groups of local women in Malawi, for example, and teaching permaculture in places where girls do get some basic education would greatly enhance the ability of women to maintain sustainable, small-scale agriculture and gain more respect. A sustainable, small-scale agricultural plot keeps families together, because when women can feed their families and earn money taking produce to markets in local town, the sons are less likely to be sent to cities to try to earn money to send home.

In countries where HIV has had a major impact on the shape of families, often girls are left to fend for siblings. Training programmes in permaculture would greatly improve the lot of these children providing them with nutritious food and establish a tradition for future generations.

The principles of permaculture can be adapted to any climate, so it is a powerful tool in adapting agriculture in the tropics (as elsewhere) to climate change and the ability of native species to survive changing weather conditions.

If we train ten women, working closely with them to relate permaculture to their local situation, they will train ten others. From one 'garden' that demonstrates how degraded land can be transformed into a fertile garden producing a healthy diversity of food that has a high nutritional value, without abusing and depleting local resources, more gardens spring up in the surrounding areas. For example, by training seven local permaculturists in Malawi, 34 permaculture gardens have emerged.

So, to sum up permaculture can work with women to emancipate them and provide higher yields of more diverse crops with a higher nutritional value.

43. Tamara Quiroz Guzmán, Facultad de Ciencias Agriolas y Forestales-UACH, Mexico

Con relación al 1er. Cuestionamiento- Propuesta para Evento Paralelo -Foro de casos exitosos donde las Mujeres Rurales son agentes de cambio en sus comunidades. Foro de Metodologías, Modelos y Técnicas para la formación como agententes de cambio a Mujeres Rurales. 2-Con relación al 2do. Cuestionamiento- La seguridad alimentaria y nutricional - Estimo esencial que las Mujeres Rurales tengan garantizado su alimentación y nutrición al igual que sus demás consanguíneos, difícil es que una Mujer contribuya al desarrollo sostenible de su comunidad si aspectos de primera necesidad no estan cubiertos. 3-Con relación al 3er. cuestionamiento-Las limitaciones en su defensa de sus derechos humanos...aun una tarea pendiente.

44. Tessa Vorbohle, HelpAge International, United Kingdom

It is good to see the increased interest in the marginalisation of women smallholders and the need for better support and land reform. A closer look at this topic shows that we need to take into account the ageing of farming population and the specific forms of discrimination that older female farmers face.

HelpAge's recent analysis of agricultural censuses in low- and middle-income countries shows that farmers in these regions are ageing. Older women represent a growing share of the farm population. In Uganda in 2009 for example, women over 55 years represented 7.5 per cent of the female farmer population. This proportion has been increasing in the past ten years.

Older women farmers represent an important part of the agricultural workforce. In Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America the proportion of economically active women over 60 who derive their livelihood from agriculture is higher than that for younger women. Data from the most recent labour force surveys, show that in sub-Saharan Africa, 58.7% of older women are employed in agriculture, while only 43.4% of the 40-59 years old and 38.3% of the 15-39 years old derive their main livelihood from agriculture. Older women are thus more dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods relative to other age groups.

At the same time, their access to land and other property is threatened by discriminatory inheritance rights and practices that leave them with little or nothing when their spouses die. Programmes and policies supporting female smallholders need to take these age-related vulnerabilities into account and actively seek their redress.

A detailed report of the above findings will be published online on HelpAge's website shortly.

45. Peter Steele, Independent Consultant Agricultural Engineer, Italy

Colleagues,

Equality in Gender

This has been an interesting debate; unique even given the extent of the many issues involved that impact - you'll know this - upon more than 50% of the world's people. I'm referring to '*women in society*' and considering my contribution as focus upon the continuing debate - difficult as it is - for equality between the genders. This is more than '*rural women*', '*food security*' and '*proper nutrition*' notwithstanding the importance of these sectors for the wellbeing of the half of humanity who

depend upon the work, tenacity and dedication of those tens of millions of small-scale farmers - the majority women - who produce sufficient to feed them.

Many of the contributions have already focused directly or built their messages upon the foundations that women agriculturalists have in traditional and, increasingly, commercial society. And this is not simply a function of biology - important as this is - given the nurturing role that comes from caring, feeding and growing the families that form around them, but because of the track record of women in agriculture. They typically out-perform their menfolk and achieve this on the basis of fewer resources, less education, discrimination based upon out-moded traditions, violence and limited political voice (or none at all).

Girls and women escape the traditions that limit their capabilities by gaining an education and/or shifting to the towns; preferably both, but then they are typically lost to agriculture. And neither are captivity and traditions simple a feature of the developing and/or industrializing countries for there is bigotry, bias and discrimination of this kind everywhere. You only have to look at political leadership in Italy and/or recently in Australia to follow the challenges of being a top female decision-maker.

Suffice to note then - and this sounds a cliché reading back over it - that partnerships represent the best options into the next period; as we have within families, communities and society-at-large. But, the reality is one, however, that will see little change in many rural communities whilst out-moded, labour-intensive, poverty-based food production systems continue to dominate. And, importantly, that does not mean bringing in the larger-scale food production systems that are beginning to dominate everywhere at the expense of small-scale. Large-scale, typically, leads to landless people.

Key questions

1. If you had made an intervention at the side event on rural women at the 8th session of the Open Working Group in New York, what would have been its key message?

Everything that can be said has already been said earlier; there are few new messages that can be promoted. Pictures tell the same messages differently, however, and catch the eye. Try the attached images from roadside posters in Zambia. Then show women training as blacksmiths, driving tractors and running food processing plants (*which I have available, but cannot find quickly*).

2. Rural women are often described as critical agents of change in discussions on sustainable development goals. To what extent would the achievement of food and nutrition security for rural women help accelerate sustainable development?

Pessimistically - no difference. Optimistically - minor incremental changes (but nothing like the changes that would come from educating girls, providing them with resilient livelihoods and making them financially independent of their menfolk).

3. Of the many facts or stats recorded on rural women, which one do you consider to be the most revealing?

Recorded for women everywhere, but more typical of those with the misfortune to be born into societies in selected African and/or middle eastern countries - Somalia (98%), Egypt (91%), Mali (89%), Ethiopia (74%), Guinea (96%), Eritrea (89%) and others. And the percentages shown? Girls and women subject to female genital mutilation. The ultimate in power subjugation - disfigure half your population or more on the basis of deep-rooted and inhuman fears of equality.

Source book

If you don't already know about it - here's the world's best source of gender/agricultural information in a single text: '*Gender in Agriculture: Sourcebook*'. It covers all the contributions already made in the debate - and some. You can access an e-copy at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/011/aj288e/aj288e00.HTM>. Check out module #1 '*Gender and Food Security*'. See if you can't get a hard copy from your local FAO, World Bank or IFAD office; much easier to read and share.

Salutations everyone.

Peter Steele
Agricultural Engineer
Rome, Italy.
26 February 2014

46. Richard Allen, Italy

Dear contributors,

Our e-consultation has now concluded and I would like to thank you for your insights on the theme of empowerment of rural women.

The quality, as much as the quantity, of your comments was of a high order. The diversity of inputs from many countries across the globe was particularly pleasing.

This consultation is particularly useful as comments could stimulate debate among decision-makers currently designing a post-2015 development framework. The consultation was linked to a side-event organised by FAO, IFAD and WFP at the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals in February 2014.

As the deadline for contributions was approaching, the OWG co-chairs released a report identifying 19 focal areas for possible inclusion among the SDGs that will be proposed to the United Nations General Assembly in September 2014. Among them were Gender equality and women's empowerment (focus area 5); and promoting equality (focus area 12).

In the coming weeks, the results of this e-consultation will feature in an article on FAO's new webpages devoted to the post-2015 process, www.fao.org/post-2015-mdg/.

In the meantime, we will retain your comments for others to read and look forward to your engagement on future themes.

Many thanks,
FAO's post-2015 team