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EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE (ECA)

FOURTEENTH SESSION OF THE WORKING PARTY ON WOMEN AND THE FAMILY IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Budapest, Hungary, 29 June – 1 July 2009

Report on Activities following the 12th WPW Session (2004)

Introduction

The Secretariat has in 2008 and 2009 prepared and presented a series of report documents on the activities of the FAO European Commission's on Agriculture (ECA) Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development (WPW), respectively for the FAO 26th Regional Conference for Europe and 35th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (Innsbruck, 2008) and the Thirteenth (Special Session) of the WPW (Rome, 15 April 2009). A special programme document has been prepared for the 14th WPW Session: *Needs Assessment and Survey 2009: present status, options and future FAO activities and cooperation with stakeholders in gender in rural development in Europe and Central Asia (ECA: 14thWPW/09/3.)*. The latter includes developed and specific recommendations for prospective WPW activities, based on comprehensive review of past work and meetings and the outcome of the special Survey of WPW participants and stakeholders in spring 2009.

The purpose of this summary 14th WPW Session document is to provide, for ease of reference, information selected from available WPW documents from previous Sessions and Expert Meetings, as available on the FAO REU website

http://www.fao.org/world/regional/REU/wpwdocs_en.htm.

WPW EXPERT MEETINGS IN 2005, 2006, 2007 AND 2008

Since 2005, the main activities of the WPW were Expert Meetings (EMs) organized at the invitation of Host Governments to review and exchange specific, field level projects' and programmes' experience on mainstreaming gender in rural development; for summary of EMs

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themes and recommendations, see ECA: WPW/09/10 Needs Assessment and Survey 2009, paras 22 to 34 ¹. The EMs addressed in turn:

- 18th EM (Krakow, Poland, 2005): Sustainable Rural Tourism: Gender and Community Perspective
- 19th EM (Pécs, Hungary, 2006): Rural Development through Diversification of Jobs and Incomes
- 20th EM (Nitra, Slovakia, 2007): Rural Development Policies and Programmes to Generate Jobs and Incomes and
- 21st EM (Tirana, Albania, 2008): Out of the Shadows: Making Female Labour in Agriculture Visible.

An important outcome of the EMs was the recommendations that future activities of the WPW should aim at a close uniformity with the FAO Gender and Development Plan of Action (GAD PoA) 2008-2013. Thus WPW future activities should contribute to the achievement of the four objectives identified in the GAD PoA:

- Promote gender equality in the access to sufficient, safe and nutritionally adequate food (food and nutrition);
- Promote gender equality in the access to, control over and management of natural resources, and agricultural support services (natural resources);
- Promote gender equality in policy- and decision-making processes at all levels in the agricultural and rural sector (policy and planning), and
- Promote gender equality in opportunities for on- and off-farm employment in rural areas (rural economies, labour and livelihoods).

Efforts would concentrate on the improvement of EM agendas and participation, since they have been assessed, by the different stakeholders, to be the most useful WPW activity in terms of relevance of topics and experience sharing. It is envisaged that improvement in the performance of EMs could be achieved through the following actions ²:

- Shortening and at the same time intensifying the programme;
- More focused technical presentations, with comprehensive peer review as part of EM preparations;
- Identifying and inviting specific target groups of participants from the CEE and Central Asia subregions, while countries more advanced in reforms and rural development with relevant experience would be invited to present and share experience, and
- Training sessions would aim to transfer knowledge and practical tools to beneficiaries on how women's empowerment can be increased; empowerment practices should be aligned to the particular topic of the EM.

It is also proposed to revitalize networking and knowledge-sharing through development of the WPW website with past WPW reports and presentations; the website would also present available best practices, experience and a contact data base. Pending availability of resources, publication of an irregular newsletter on gender and rural development with ESW support could be considered (for ECA and WPW Board decision).

¹ The complete EMs Reports and recommendations are available as a table documents during the 14th WPW.

² For comprehensive summary, see ECA 35/08/4 Status of the ECA Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development, paras 23 through 28 refer.

SELECTED ESW ACTIVITIES AND GENDER ISSUES IN RURAL AREAS IN EUROPE ³

Since the 1990s transition and market reforms, a significant improvement in the standard of living and quality of life of rural populations in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Central Asia countries has been recorded. Nevertheless, rural women and men continue to face numerous difficulties and constraints to economic development such as the need for improved infrastructure and better access to inputs and to markets for farm products and rural services as well as the challenge of upgrading social services in rural areas. The disappearance of the centrally planned economy, continuing social and economic transition, European Union enlargement, Common Agricultural Policy-aligned reforms but also globalization, and impacts of climate change have affected rural populations and, in particular, women. Since men and women continue to face different responsibilities and needs when it comes to ensuring food security and participating in income-earning activities, addressing gender issues in rural development remains therefore an issue of outstanding importance.

In the heterogeneous and diverse CEE and Central Asia subregions, the Working Party on Women (WPW) fills a gap with regard to the research and analysis of the potential consequences of current developments in rural areas for rural people and especially women. In this context, networking is a tool for raising awareness of the situation of rural women and for addressing the major constraints and challenges they face. Experience and lessons learned, reported and discussed during the recent WPW Expert Meetings (EMs) have provided an interesting and comprehensive account of the successful outcomes of implemented projects but also underlined the various types and intensity of constraints and difficulties rural people and particularly women still have to struggle with. The WPW provides a forum for such experience sharing and training at multiple levels of stakeholders in rural development.

GENDER ISSUES IN LAND REFORM AND IMPROVED ACCESS TO ASSETS

FAO work on land reform and rural development as part of the monitoring of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) looks at respecting women's rights during reforms and ensuring women's access to land and assets, including legal rights (e.g. inheritance) ⁴. A number of countries in the CEE and Central Asia subregions may be interested in FAO experience in this field, in particular capacity-building projects in the advanced stages of land reform, including food security-oriented policies and support instruments for small farms.

GENDER ASPECTS IN CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AREAS

A number of recent FAO Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESW, Economic and Social Development Department) publications address gender issues within the framework and context of impacts of climate change and sustainable agriculture and rural development, including energy resources, and, gender equity in agriculture in the light of economic globalization. In *Energy and Gender Issues in Rural Sustainable Development*, FAO promotes the view that increased access to energy sources in rural areas and the development of new bioenergy sources can contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals as well as to the improvement of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

³ Excerpted from ECA: WPW/09/2 Gender Issues in Rural Areas in Europe and ECA WPW Activities.

⁴ Rural Women's Access to Land and Property in Selected Countries, FAO, IFAD and ILC, Rome, 2004. This report explored, among other issues, the experiences of Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

Gender: The Missing Component in the Response to Climate Change in turn analyses the gender dimension of climate change and policies enacted to mitigate impacts and adapt. Gender aspects appear to have been neglected so far, although clearly societies' resilience to climate change will depend on the capacity to react by specific social groups, including rural women. Women's share of greenhouse gas emissions appears to be lower since they depend on less-emission intensive technologies (but labour intensive), for example with regard to transport or livestock breeding. Women's adaptive capacity as managers of livelihood assets appears high, despite the fact that they are low (or non) income earners and poverty is feminized. Policy recommendations for mitigation and adaptation will be better targeted and effective if gender aspects are incorporated. While both the project experience reviewed and the analytical work on water management, deforestation implications, and risk management, in the above publications are based on experience and focus on Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries, the methodological approaches and training material may be of interest and applicable in the CEE and Central Asia subregions.

SEAGA

The Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis Programme (SEAGA)⁵ that was established in 1994 supports the formulation of projects, programmes and policies for development that are more sustainable, equitable and efficient. Socio-economic and gender analysis is the identification of responsibilities, needs and priorities of different groups of people, taking into account variables such as age, wealth, religion, ethnicity, and looks at the role of, and relationships between men and women for a better understanding of their situation. SEAGA analyses these linkages at three levels: macro, intermediate: institutions and field: communities, households and individuals. It provides development workers with practical methods and tools to raise awareness of gender issues and is highly participatory, working through networks. SEAGA workshops and training of trainers are organized regularly throughout regions. SEAGA is in particular useful for mainstreaming gender issues into the project planning process.

A Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division Officer participated in the 21st ECA WPW Expert Meeting in Tirana in October 2006 to present FAO's experience in mainstreaming gender and rural employment issues in a subregion that requires considerable support with regard to gender issues. One of the recommendations was to continue activities to collect, analyse and disseminate **gender disaggregated data and statistics**, including those on labour resources use and remuneration, as a base for gender-sensitive remuneration and social security policies. FAO applies a "household resource management approach" to analyse patterns of access, decision-making and relations in rural families and communities and this approach is promoted in project formulation. This method may be applicable in the CEE and Central Asia transition economies.

The WPW, as an advisory FAO body, will continue to work on issues pertinent to sustainable rural development along the lines of the long-term priorities endorsed by the 26th and Regional Conference for Europe and FAO's Gender and Development Plan of Action (GAD PoA) for 2008-2013. The WPW approach provides a framework for assisting Member States as follows:

- providing support to the formulation of gender-sensitive rural development policies, including diversification of rural activities and generation of alternative income, local and national capacity-building and institution strengthening, with special attention to gender issues;
- providing support for the development of gender-sensitive policies for effective land administration and management to facilitate rural development;

⁵ For list of Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis Programme (SEAGA) manuals and guides, see: <http://www.fao.org/sd/seaga>.

- promoting regional cooperation in the collection, dissemination and use of gender disaggregated data (quantitative and qualitative) and information for policy planning, and in the use of SEAGA methodology and its adaptation to the national context;
- providing support to the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national action plans to promote gender mainstreaming in institutions and development programmes and projects;
- monitoring processes such as the ageing of the population, the age-related feminization of agricultural activities and outmigration of youth and its impact on food safety and quality issues, and
- providing support to strengthen the capacities of rural public institutions and private sector and civil society organizations at all levels to devise and implement gender-sensitive policies and strategies that improve the quality of life of rural populations.

WPW Priorities in the Region

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

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

to access markets. Lack of information also limits women's influence in communities and ability to participate in decision-making, and

- **Climate change and bio-energy:** Climate change exacerbates existing vulnerability and food insecurity. Since women and men are affected differently by the scarcity of resources, gender sensitive adaptation and mitigation approaches are needed.

REPORT OF THE 13TH (SPECIAL) SESSION OF THE WPW

The Report of the 13th (Special) Session of the WPW, held in Rome on 15 April 2009, provided the following main recommendations for the WPW⁶.

1. The Secretariat should use the opportunity of the FAO Reform process to streamline the WPW activities and make these more efficient and relevant and
2. The WPW Regular Sessions were proposed to be incorporated into the agenda of the ERC.

The secretariat was requested to prepare an issues/position paper for the next regular Session of the WPW that would outline options for

1. financing from FAO Regular Programme (RP) and from extra-budgetary resources of gender mainstreaming and WPW activities in the European Region, taking into account
2. the view of some countries that gender being an FAO priority and constituting a Strategic Objective, RP resource should be earmarked for activities in following biennia and
3. modalities for including the WPW activities as a regular item into the ECA and ERC agenda, to be reviewed by the ERC with a view to prioritization of FAO work in the Region and for most efficient ways of mainstreaming gender issues into FAO policies and national programmes. The secretariat was encouraged to prepare by September 2009 an appeal to replenish the Trust Fund and to organize the 14th regular WPW Session to address the impact of migrations on rural communities and the situation of women to be held in Budapest, Hungary, by end of June 2009.

The Secretariat would like to put forward for review and consideration by the 14th WPW Session, the following issues, with a view to presentation to the next European Commission on Agriculture Session of which the WPW is a subsidiary body:

1. REU has included in the work plans for 2010 and 2011 under Strategic Objective K. ***Gender equity in access to resources, goods, services and decision-making in the rural areas*** proposals for both staff time and non-staff resources for activities addressing mainstreaming gender in rural development in the European region, with focus on Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia transition economies, including support to the WPW;
2. REU will support the new Board of the WPW, elected during the 14th Session in its work in 2009 and early 2010 to plan future activities, as based on the outcome and recommendations of the 13th (Special) and 14th Session, in particular
3. the assessment and development of format and modalities of the future regular Sessions of the WPW and format and themes of Expert Meetings;
4. A report on WPW activities in 2008 and 2009 will be presented to the 36th Session of the ECA that will be held immediately before the 27th ERC in 2010 in Armenia and
5. REU prepare proposals for including WPW activities as a regular item in the forthcoming 2010 ERC and ECA Sessions, including the organization of a WPW regular Session back-to-back with the ERC.

⁶ ECA: WPW/09/7 Report of the ECA WPW Thirteenth (Special) Session.