



**Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations**

## **Informal Consultation for Europe and Central Asia Budapest, 18-19 May 2015**

### **FAO Regional gender strategy for Europe and Central Asia**

#### **Background**

1. The FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia is committed to mainstreaming gender dimensions in providing support to Member Countries and national institutions in developing and implementing policies, programs and strategies that aim at attaining food security and nutrition goals through sustainable and equitable rural development. In this regard, REU's strategy is driven by the status of gender as a cross-cutting theme within Organization's Strategic Framework, as reaffirmed in the Medium Term Plan 2014-17 (Reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget 2016-17 which will be considered by the FAO Conference in June 2015.
2. REU pays particular attention to Eastern European and Central Asian countries where the majority of its technical assistance projects are implemented. Gender and social protection perspectives are intertwined in these countries, and represent a complex challenge as gender inequalities have grown during the transition from centrally planned economies to the free market, and many women have lost a number of social protection benefits associated with the socialist system. Accordingly, women now account for a disproportionately high number of the unemployed, especially in rural areas crucial for food security and nutrition.
3. In Europe and Central Asia women's participation in labor force remains relatively high at 60 percent, which is slightly above the global average. However, they have far less access to arable land and technology, and for rural women in particular, issues related to access and control over land, credit, and other productive resources remain a major concern. Similarly, gender challenges in the region exist in relation to education and agribusiness opportunities.

#### **Key element of FAO's regional gender strategy for Europe and Central Asia**

4. The Regional gender strategy will build on the existing approaches for mainstreaming gender across the FAO Strategic Framework and the relevant Regional Initiatives. Currently, nearly 44 percent of all approved technical cooperation (TCP) projects in the region have commitments for gender mainstreaming.

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5. FAO's main areas of focus within the strategy will include:

- (1) **Knowledge building, Advocacy and Communications**, including enhancement of the communication with national institutions;
- (2) **Capacity Development** of FAO technical staff and national partners to enhance their skills
- (3) **Gender Mainstreaming** through the support to Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) and Technical Cooperation projects (TCP)
- (4) **Social Protection** for rural population, through evidence-based knowledge instruments to assess the impact of social protection mechanisms on reducing inequalities, improving rural livelihoods and strengthening ability of the rural poor to manage risks.