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Agenda Item 6

STATUS OF THE ECA WORKING PARTY ON WOMEN AND THE FAMILY IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development (WPW) is a subsidiary body of the FAO European Commission on Agriculture (ECA). The WPW was established in 1965 at the 14th Session of the ECA (Resolution ECA 8/65) under the title ECA Working Party on Home Economics. With the gradual recognition of the important role of farm and rural women in the socio-economic development of rural communities, the Twelfth FAO Regional Conference for Europe decided to change the name of the working party to “Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development”. The WPW is open to all ECA Member Nations.

A. ORGANIZATION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKING PARTY ON WOMEN (WPW)

2. The overall objective of the WPW is to assist FAO member governments, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) to undertake joint actions and cooperate in gender and development projects as well as encourage and facilitate cooperation between international governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with this topic, and to make recommendations on all matters within its geographical competence. The WPW is the only formal group within the European Region that works specifically with issues relevant to rural women and gender aspects of rural development that is open to all countries and country groups and brings together government ministries and agencies involved in, and responsible for, gender issues and rural development to work together and exchange experience with NGOs and CSOs.

3. The specific WPW activities include:

- Exchange of information and experience with a view to promoting the role of women and the family in agriculture and rural development;
- Promotion of professional development of rural women;
- Cooperation with institutions and agencies striving for the integration of women in rural development, and
- Formulation of policy recommendations on matters pertaining to education, research, extension, training and other related fields within their areas of technical competence.

4. Being a subsidiary body of the ECA, the WPW reports to the ECA and the Rules of Procedure of the ECA apply *mutatis mutandis* to the WPW. The Board of the Working Party, composed of representatives of up to seven Member Nations, including a Chairman and two Vice-Chairmen (elected at sessions), expedites follow-up activities and acts as an advisory committee between sessions. The Board meets once-twice a year and - in cooperation with and assisted since 2005 by the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) and the Sub-regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe (SEU) that services the WPW - develops a plan of activities for a given biennium that includes regular meetings, workshops, WPW sessions, seminars, projects, studies and technical consultations.

5. The WPW biennial sessions provide a forum for making policy recommendations and decisions, evaluating existing activities and determining the future orientation of the WPW. The themes for sessions are put forward by participants and relate to the priority needs of Member Nations. Inputs and discussions on pertinent aspects lead to the formulation of recommendations for future development.

6. The main WPW activities in recent years have been the annual Expert Meetings (EMs) and acting as an informal forum for the exchange of ideas, experiences and knowledge. The 11th Session of the WPW (Fribourg, Switzerland, 14 to 17 October 2002) proposed to change the annual WPW International Rural Development Summer Schools to WPW EMs on Gender and Rural

Development. The EMs focus on training techniques, methodologies, and the acquisition of information and skills that are useful for stakeholders working in the rural development sector. The meetings also serve as a platform for discussion and sharing of information and experiences between participants and countries – both during and after the meetings.

B. THE “RAISON D’ÊTRE” OF THE WPW

7. 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 Asian 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 new farm products and services as well as for upgrading social services in rural areas. The disappearance of the centrally planned economy, continuing social and economic transition, EU enlargement, Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reforms where relevant, globalization, and climate change have all affected rural populations and, in particular, women. Men and women find themselves facing different responsibilities and needs when it comes to securing food and participating in income-earning activities. Addressing gender issues in rural development is therefore still an issue of outstanding importance.

8. In the heterogeneous and diverse CEE and Central Asian regions, the WPW fills a gap with regard to the investigation 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 past WPW 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.

C. WPW ACTIVITIES AND THEMES

9. Since 1965, the WPW has organized seventeen sessions, fourteen Board meetings, fourteen Summer Schools and six EMs. In addition, the WPW Board and members have participated in numerous workshops, meetings, training sessions and other initiatives dealing with rural development and gender issues. More detailed information on WPW activities is available in Annex I.

10. The WPW sessions, Summer Schools and EMs have covered a wide range of topics and have attracted the participation of experts from most of the CEE and Central Asian countries. Between 1982 and 1988 activities and programmes focused mainly on pluriactivity and extension in agriculture and for rural development. Since 1988, the orientation shifted to community development and from 1990 to rural development through support to entrepreneurship. From 1997, work on the application of FAO Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis (SEAGA) methodology was included in the activities of the WPW. The SEAGA methodology, due to its relevance for the region, has to date remained a regular component of the EMs. Since 2000, EM themes have addressed youth in rural areas, food safety and product quality, agro- and rural tourism, diversification of jobs and microfinance to support rural SMEs, and the development of products and services for rural markets and for exports outside the region. The main themes covered by the different activities of the WPW are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Main themes covered by the WPW between 1990 and 2007

Theme	Year
Socio-economic factors in rural development – Implications for women	1990
Rural development through entrepreneurship and village renewal	1991
People’s participation in the development of rural areas through community building	1992
The role of partnership and networking in rural development – How can women be involved.	1992
Rural and agro-tourism development in Europe	1992
Management and implementation of rural development projects	1993
The family as the basic socio-economic unit in sustainable rural development	1994
Socio-economic situation and status of rural women in selected Central and Eastern European countries	1994
Training of rural women in entrepreneurship and small business development	1994
Nutrition as a factor in family wellbeing	1994
Women and youth in rural development	1994
Research on rural women and youth	1994
Challenges and opportunities for youth in rural areas	2000
Alternative initiatives for rural development	2001
Planning, monitoring and evaluation of rural development programmes and projects with a view to integration of gender and participatory dimensions	2002
Food safety and quality	2004
Institutional capacity-building for rural women’s empowerment	2004
Transborder networking: An approach for a participatory and gender-sensitive rural development	2004
Sustainable rural tourism: a gender and community perspective	2005
Rural development through diversification of jobs and incomes. Focus on gender-responsive microfinance.	2006
Rural development policies and programmes to generate jobs and incomes. Gender Focus: from product and services development to marketing. Lessons learned during European integration and market transition.	2007

D. CURRENT STATUS OF THE WPW

11. The Secretariat for the WPW was provided by the outposted Gender and Development Officer, Regional Office for Europe (REU), until December 2004, when the post was abolished as a consequence of budgetary constraints faced by the Organization. The 33rd Session of the ECA was informed that it was necessary to scale down technical support to the WPW by the Gender and Population Division (SDW) in view of budgetary constraints.

12. In an effort to ensure the continuation of WPW activities until December 2007, extrabudgetary funds amounting to US\$52,900 were transferred to FAO in December 2005 by four donors (Austria, Lithuania, Norway and Switzerland) in support of WPW activities for the next two to three years, and a Multilateral Trust Fund project (GCP/RER/018/MUL) was established. The project's immediate objectives were: (a) build capacity to mainstream and analyse gender-specific needs in agriculture and rural development work through the organization of expert meetings and workshops; and (b) facilitate the exchange of information, knowledge and experiences related to gender issues, agriculture and rural development in the Region.

13. Since February 2008, a Junior Technical Officer for Rural Development with Focus on Gender in the Sub-regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe in Budapest provides secretariat for the WPW and technical expertise in rural development and mainstreaming gender as well as identification and formulation of projects. REU/SEU has also received a Regular Programme allotment for the 2008-2009 biennium to support up to two WPW events, e.g. a session and an EM.

14. In 2006, the ECA Executive Committee submitted the following options for consideration by the 34th Session of the ECA:

- (a) to recommend to the FAO Council the abolition of the WPW in December 2007 or when funds in the Trust Fund GCP/RER/018/MUL were extinguished;
- (b) to maintain the WPW as a subsidiary body of the ECA on condition that extra-budgetary support from interested donors was ensured.

15. It was proposed that should the ECA endorse option (a), the Executive Committee would ensure that an item on gender-related issues would become a standing item of ECA future sessions. Further, if the ECA should endorse option (b), the Executive Committee recommended that it be mandated to undertake an assessment of the objectives of the WPW and its methods of work. The Executive Committee was to report its findings to the 35th Session of the ECA. In the interim period and considering the limited resources available in Trust Fund GCP/RER/018/MUL, the Executive Committee recommended that the WPW activities should adhere to the objectives of project GCP/RER/018/MUL, i.e. to organize the yearly thematic EM and to facilitate exchange of information on gender issues through networking. In addition, technical assistance to the WPW was also to be covered through extra-budgetary resources.

II. FUTURE AND REVIVAL OF THE ECA WPW

A. THE WPW IN THE EUROPEAN REGION

16. The WPW is the only FAO statutory body in the European region which specifically addresses gender issues. Its strength is its organization as a broad network with a multidisciplinary approach representing a range of professions, institutions and organizations in which capacity-building is the key element. It creates a unique platform in the FAO European region for the exchange of knowledge and experience focusing on gender and rural development issues.

17. The WPW is guided by the principles of equality. Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment is Millennium Development Goal 3, and is essential to reducing poverty and improving rural livelihoods.

18. In the past, the WPW has contributed to placing gender issues on the agenda of countries in the region, to addressing the needs of rural men and women in relevant policies, programmes and projects, and has been successful in establishing new forms of cooperation and networking between the institutional and grass-roots levels. The WPW has been particularly successful in providing a forum or focal point for meetings for rural women, researchers, practitioners and policy-makers involved in rural development, and its working approach has led to greater sensitivity and awareness of issues pertinent to rural women.

19. The WPW EMs provided opportunities for study tours to rural areas in different countries, so that representatives from member countries could get a real impression of rural areas. Study tours have brought to light many rural development problems that contribute to poverty, but are difficult to quantify. For instance, the lack of confidence among some people living in peripheral areas, their lack of marketing 'know how' and exposure to new ideas, and feelings of disempowerment due to a lack of focus on their rural area.

20. Interest in the WPW EMs has remained stable and, as the EM reports demonstrate, these meetings served to shed light on key issues concerning the situation of women in countries of the Region. As far as networking and exchange of information are concerned, the objectives of the WPW have only partially been achieved. The intensity of networking has significantly decreased over the last years. There is room and need for improvement in this aspect.

21. 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 22nd Regional Conference for Europe and FAO's Gender and Development Plan of Action (GAD PoA) for 2008-2013 (see Part II.B.). The WPW approach provides a framework for assisting member countries 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;
- 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 the Socioeconomic and Gender Analysis (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, 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.

B. PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

22. In planning future activities, FAO, the ECA and the WPW need to make every effort to mainstream gender into agriculture and rural development and, in particular, into areas that call for immediate attention; i.e. issues of food safety and quality, women's and men's equal and active participation in agriculture and rural development programmes and projects, equal access to decision-making, education, resources and services and information, equal employment benefits from agriculture and rural development for both men and women.

23. The most important priority for the WPW itself would be the revitalization of its own operations. The aim should be to construct and maintain a living¹ network with tangible, useful and practical outcomes. In order to achieve this goal the following priority tasks are planned:

- Increase the consistency of the WPW themes and activities with the United Nations Gender and Development Plan of Action (2008-2013) and the priorities to be approved by the Twenty-sixth FAO Regional Conference for Europe 2008;
- Concentrate efforts on the improved identification and selection of EM themes;
- Strengthen cooperation among past and future EM participants and enhance networking activities to facilitate exchange of information and capacity-building;
- Intensify cooperation with partners, placing emphasis on the role of NGOs and CSOs;
- Develop cooperation with the FAO Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESW) and the annual workshops on gender-disaggregated data (ultimately organizing an EM on gender-related development indicators), and
- Undertake a survey on the expectations of EM participants.

Consistency of the WPW themes and activities with the United Nations Gender and Development Plan of Action

24. The future activities of the WPW will aim at a close uniformity with the FAO Gender and Development Plan of Action (GAD PoA) 2008-2013. The intention of the WPW to work within the long-term priorities endorsed by the previous FAO GAD PoA 2002-2007 was affirmed at the WPW 2002 Session. 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).

25. 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 these global trends and their gender aspects and development approach 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 already 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. The role of remittances in local economic development.
 - *Ageing of the Rural population.* Combined with outmigration, the impact on the composition of the rural labour force and the division of labour by age and sex.
 - *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.

¹ A living network is a dynamic communications concept. It interlinks people with different scientific and institutional backgrounds. It keeps interest alive and stimulates discussion and experience sharing on the most significant issues. It offers a regular forum rich in content and information. It creates cohesion among members.

- **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. The dearth of secure land tenure systems that provide access to land and other natural resources make it difficult for the rural poor 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. Women's situation is further exacerbated by sexual abuse in some countries in the Region. This results in high rates of HIV and AIDS infections for women.
- **Information technology:** The technology revolution can accelerate progress towards gender equality, but it can also exacerbate existing inequalities. Rural women usually have less access than men to information and new technologies. Consequently, they are at a disadvantage in making informed choices for example about what to produce or how to access markets. Lack of information also limits women's influence in communities and ability to participate in decision-making.
- **Climate change and 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.

26. The themes proposed by the Secretariat for the next EM (see Annex III) have been developed taking into account the GAD PoA objectives, the reviewed global and regional trends and the recommendations emerging from the rural development and projects-related issues discussed at past EMs (see Annex II).

Proposed actions to improve the themes and organization of Expert Meetings (EMs)

27. Building on past experience, the EMs are at present the most important activity of the WPW. Efforts would concentrate on 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:

- Shortening and at the same time intensifying the programme;
- More focused technical presentations;
- Identifying and inviting specific target groups of participants with attention to the CEE and Central Asian Region, while countries more advanced in reforms and rural development with relevant experience would be invited to present and share experience;
- 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.

28. Belarus, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the Central Asian countries are relatively new members of FAO. The WPW together with the Sub-regional Office for Central Asia (SEC) will explore opportunities to fund the preparation of a paper focusing on gender issues in agriculture and rural development in these countries, when possible, proposing it to link to the theme of the WPW EM.

Strengthening cooperation among past and future EM participants and enhance networking activity

29. Strengthened cooperation among past and future EM participants is vital for achieving the main objectives of the WPW (Section I.A). Effective networking to exchange information and experience with a view to promoting the role of women and the family in rural development remains the key goal. The need for improved networking has been emphasized several times by past sessions of the WPW. It is proposed to revitalize networking and knowledge sharing through:

- Creation and management of an active mailing list to keep members up-to-date on issues and activities concerning gender and rural development; and to provide a platform where questions and experience can be shared;
- Preparation by the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU)/Sub-regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe (SEU) Secretariat of a data base of activities and projects of interest to participants;
- Preparation of an electronic book(let) containing the success stories presented and reviewed during past EMs to increase awareness of rural women's success stories;
- Development of the WPW website with past WPW reports and presentations and papers (producing a compendium from the selected documents prepared for the EMs). The website would also present available best practices, experience and a contact data base;
- Publication of a quarterly newsletter on gender and rural development (REU/SEU and WPW Board).

Intensification of cooperation with international, governmental and non-governmental organizations working on gender issues in rural areas

30. Cooperation with institutions, organizations and agencies, with special emphasis on NGOs and CSOs, for the integration of women in rural development is one of the major objectives of the WPW and vital for increasing the capacity of the WPW to raise awareness of the situation of rural women and enhance their empowerment. The following institutions have been identified as being of priority importance for future contacts and collaboration.

- | | |
|---|--|
| • IFAD – International Fund for Agricultural Development | • ILO – International Labour Organization |
| • UNIFEM – United Nations Development Fund for Women | • The World Bank |
| • UNDP – United Nations Development Programme | • EBRD - European Bank for Reconstruction and Development |
| • United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women | • OECD – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Cooperation Directorate, Gender Equality and Development |
| • United Nations Commission on the Status of Women | • European Commission (also the Gender Equality Office to be set up in Vilnius) |
| • United Nations Division on the Advancement of Women | • CEI - Central European Initiative |
| • IACWGE – United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Woman and Gender Equality | • IOM – International Organization for Migration |
| • ECOSOC - United Nations Economic and Social Council | |

Government institutions

31. A basic problem faced by the WPW and the EMs in the past has been the low response by Ministries of Agriculture to invitations to events and activities related to gender and rural women entrepreneurs. It is noted that for a number of Ministries of Agriculture in the CEE and Central Asian

Sub-region, both rural development and gender issues remain a secondary priority. Ministries often lack comprehensive information on the importance and relevance of gender issues, lack experience and expertise, for example, on gender aspects of land reforms or reforms of the farmers' social security systems and on the potential discrimination of women. In order to remedy this, the REU/SEU Secretariat would undertake to expand the contact base for WPW activities to other Ministries and Government agencies that address issues related to minorities and women but, on the other hand, do not always view rural areas and populations as their potential target group.

32. The REU/SEU Secretariat would make a continuing effort to work with Ministries of Agriculture and to collaborate with other national institutions and agencies dealing with gender and rural development, such as Ministries of Labour, Social Affairs, Economy, Integration, etc. as well as with extension services, research centres, statistical offices. Moreover, it is planned to approach FAO permanent representatives.

Non-governmental organizations

33. Special effort and attention will be dedicated to NGOs dealing with gender and rural development issues. Some NGOs with which contact has been established include

- **Albania:** Albanian Centre for Economic Research; Rural Research Institute;
- **Armenia:** Association of Farmers of Armenia – Haifermer;
- **Azerbaijan:** Eurasia Foundation;
- **Kazakhstan:** Women Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan; Society for the Promotion of Women's Initiatives; Association of Businesswomen of Kazakhstan;
- **Kyrgyzstan:** Forum of Women's NGOs of Kyrgyzstan; Women's League of Creative Initiative of Kyrgyzstan;
- **Moldova:** Women's Organization of Moldova; Association of Women of Gagauzia; National Council of Women of Moldova;
- **Serbia:** Association of Business Women; Femina Creativa;
- **Tajikistan:** "Simo" Women's Association; Women of Villages; Association of Business Women "Dilafruz"; "Women for Progress" Business Association; Women of the East;
- **Turkmenistan:** Union of Women "Kurban Soltan Edje";
- **Ukraine:** The World of Women; Western-Ukrainian Centre "Women's Perspectives"; Scientific Centre for Women's Research; Kharkov Centre for Gender Studies;
- **Uzbekistan:** Tadbirkor Ayol Republican Women's Business Association; "Ayol" Resource Centre for Women and the Family; Business Women's Association of Uzbekistan; Centre for Women Leaders; Women's Resource Centre.
- International Alliance of Women
- ICW - International Council of Women
- KARAT – Regional Coalition of Women's NGOs in CEE and CIS
- WWSF – Women's World Summit Foundation
- OXFAM Novib working in Eastern Europe and Central Asia
- NEWW – Network of East West Women
- WIDE – Women in Development Europe
- EWL – European Women's Lobby
- IFAP – International Federation of Agricultural Producers
- WECF – Women in Europe for a Common Future
- George Soros Foundation Network.

III. DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF THE 21ST FAO/ECA WPW EXPERT MEETING

34. The following agenda and organization are proposed by the REU/SEU Secretariat for the next, 21st FAO/ECA WPW EM, should the Executive Committee recommend to continue activities.

A. DATE AND LOCATION

35. The date of the 21st Expert Meeting (EM) is proposed for autumn 2008. Albania, Italy, and Serbia have in the past informally expressed interest in hosting an EM.

B. AREAS OF CONCENTRATION/PRIORITY AREAS

36. The WPW has identified the Western Balkan countries (thus Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and TFYR of Macedonia) and the Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) as well as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine as priority areas.

37. It is noted that while women in other European countries struggle with manifold problems these are mainly the result of recognized and researched earlier discussed global challenges. Women living in the above groups of countries also have to face the traditional gender disparities and the specific problems of socio-economic transition. Some of the significant adversities rural women face are:

- Low living standards and extreme poverty as a side effect of transition, unemployment and wars and disasters in some countries;
- Particularly high unemployment for women due to gender discrimination;
- Lack of economic and social recognition of women's work, and the double burden of earning an income and caretaking at home and looking after the household farm;
- Deteriorating health status both of women, men and children due to stress, depression and malnutrition in poverty-affected groups;
- Special needs of households headed by women following male out-migration and particular needs of single and widowed women and their families;
- Women entrepreneurs and farmers' limited access to assets (e.g. owning a property and starting a business, access to credit);
- Limited access for women to social networks and opportunities for education; decreasing literacy level for girls in rural areas and reduction of reproductive health and social services for women;
- A return to more traditional attitudes towards gender roles at some levels of society;
- Significant gender-related pay gap, women earn half of men's salary;
- Trafficking of women and forced labour;
- Low level of women's bargaining power and negligible role in decision-making and political representation.

C. TARGET PARTICIPATION GROUPS AND COUNTRIES

38. The target country groups and institutions the WPW would wish to invite would be divided into two groups; the first group would benefit from the presented experience and offered capacity-building from the second group, more advanced in reforms and from transition Western and Central European countries.

39. The WPW aims to increase the participation of NGOs and CSOs that are effectively working on the ground and have practical information to share and learn from. Besides the above groups, the following individuals would be invited and supported to participate in the EMs:

- Technical staff of Ministries of Agriculture and Rural/Regional Development, Social Affairs, Economy, Integration and Labour responsible for gender issues and gender mainstreaming;
- Scholars, researchers and young professionals with field experience;
- Practitioners in the field and beneficiaries to recount their own experiences and points of view.

D. DURATION OF THE EXPERT MEETING AND BOARD MEETING

40. It is planned to hold shorter EMs in future of no more than three working days. The country projects and experience would require two days. One half day would be dedicated to a study tour and a further half day to a training session. A separate session for training would reinforce the role of the WPW in capacity-building. The theme of the training would cover the specific needs of the current EM theme with concentration on one particular argument. The meeting of the WPW Board would, as in past years, take place during the EM in order to rationalize costs.

E. RESOURCE PERSONS AND CROSS-REFEREES

41. EMs would continue to involve and rely on resource persons to introduce and facilitate discussions and work. The training session would necessitate an additional specialist resource person, e.g. for SEAGA. It is proposed to assign cross-referees to each presentation and these cross-referees would prepare questions in advance of the session for discussion or comment.

F. PROPOSED THEMES FOR THE 21ST EXPERT MEETING

42. The proposed themes for the 21st EM relate to the priority areas of intervention of the GAD PoA and to the global trends identified by the GAD PoA 2008-2013, and would address key issues for rural women in the CEE Sub-region, thus:

- Impact and consequences of migration seen as part of population dynamics as a global trend, viewed at regional and country as well as at household levels; this theme emerged as one of the most important issues in the priority countries;
- Access to and control over livelihood assets: increased land tenure security. It is one of the strategic objectives of the FAO GAD PoA, and is viewed as an element resulting from the increased pressure on natural resources and their sustainable management, and is one of the most significant issues for the Western Balkan and Central Asian countries;
- Women's labour at the farm and farm household level; one of the four objectives of the FAO GAD PoA namely Rural Economies, Labour and Livelihoods.

Annotated Agenda proposals are provided in Annex III.

ANNEX I

WPW ACTIVITIES 1965-2008

Working Party on Home Economics

- 1st Session - Rome, Italy, May 1966
- 2nd Session - Rome, Italy, September 1969
- 3rd Session - Rome, Helsinki, Finland, July 1972
- 4th Session - Rome, Italy, October 1974
- 5th Session - Innsbruck, Austria, September 1980

WPW Sessions

- 1st Session Brest, France, 13-17 September 1982
- 2nd Session Sofia, Bulgaria, 1-5 October 1984
- 3rd Session Santa Coloma de Farners, Spain, 6-10 October 1986
- 4th Session Rome, Italy, 11-14 October 1988
- 5th Session Prague, Czechoslovakia, 2-5 October 1990
- 6th Session Innsbruck, Austria, 13-16 October 1992
- 7th Session Athens, Greece, 18-21 October 1994
- 8th Session Akureyri, Iceland, 25-28 September 1996
- 9th Session Yerevan, Armenia, 30 September-3 October 1998
- 10th Session Innsbruck Austria, 4-7 October 2000
- 11th Session Fribourg, Switzerland, 14-17 October 2002
- 12th Session Nitra, Slovakia, 18-21 October 2004

Board of the WP on Women and the Family in Rural Development

- 2nd Session, Budapest, Hungary, 11-12 April 1991
- 3rd Session, Madrid, Spain, 28-30 June 1993
- Informal Meeting, Rome, Italy, 20-21 January 1992
- Informal Meeting, Rome, Italy, 27-28 January 1995
- Informal Meeting, Rome, Italy, 15-16 February 1996
- Informal Meeting, Rome, Italy, 6-7 February 1997
- Informal Meeting, Rome, Italy, 5-6 February 1998
- Informal Meeting, Rome, Italy, 8-9 April 1999
- Informal Meeting, Rome, Italy, 3-4 December 2001 (for 2002)
- Informal Meeting, Rome, Italy, 6-7 February 2003
- Informal Meeting, Rome, Italy, 6-7 November 2003 (for 2004)
- Informal Meeting, Rome, Italy, 10-11 December 2004
- Informal Meeting, Budapest, Hungary, 12 December 2005
- Informal Meeting, Rome, Italy, 2-4 April 2007

FAO International Rural Development Summer School

- 1st - Vienna, Austria, 7-12 July 1986
 - 2nd - Maribor, Yugoslavia, 7-11 September 1987
 - 3rd - Vienna, Austria, 5-9 March 1990
 - 4th - Mikkeli, Finland, 16-20 September 1991
 - 5th - Svarstad, Norway, 15-19 June 1992
 - 6th - Bled, Slovenia, 6-10 September 1993
 - 7th - Herrsching, Germany 8-14 September 1994
 - 8th - Malaga, Spain, 18-23 September 1995
 - 9th - Ayr, Scotland, 2-7 September 1996
 - 10th - Selce, Croatia, 23-28 June 1997
 - 11th - Tripoli, Greece, 8-13 June 1998
 - 12th - Roosta Holiday Village, Estonia, 2-8 August 1999
 - 13th - Celtic Haven Village, Wales, United Kingdom, 9-15 September 2000
 - 14th - Kiltimagh, Ireland, 16-22 September 2001
- (Alternative Initiatives for Rural Development)

Expert Meetings on Gender and Rural Development

- 15th EM, Mikkeli, Finland, June 2002
- 16th EM, Birstonas, Lithuania, September 2003
- 17th EM, Salzburg, Austria, 14-18 June 2004
- 18th EM, Krakow, Poland, 5-9 September 2005
- 19th EM, Pécs, Hungary, 25-29 September 2006
- 20th EM, Nitra, Slovakia, 28 November - 1 December 2007

Other activities

- Technical Team Meeting on “The analysis of the Socio-economic Status of Rural Women in CEEC”, Vienna, Austria, March 1993.
- Workshop on “The Analysis of the Socio-economic Status of Rural Women in CEEC”, Nitra, Slovakia, 17-19 January 1994.
- International Workshop on “The Analysis of the Socio-economic Status of Rural women in CEEC”, Tallinn, Estonia, 13-17 June 1995.
- International Workshop on the Preparation of the National Action Plan for the Integration of Rural Women in Development, Wageningen, The Netherlands, 18-20 January 1996.
- Sub-regional Workshop on the Preparation of the National Action Plan for the Integration of Rural Women in Development, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 23-25 October 1997.
- Sub-regional Workshop on Women’s Participation in Policy-Making Processes in Rural Communities, Gausdal, Norway, 4-10 May 1998.
- SEAGA Training for Trainers Workshop, Malaga, Spain, 31 May - 11 June 1999.
- The Regional Follow-up Workshop on the Preparation of the National Action Plan for the Integration of Rural Women in Development, Liptovsky Mikulas, Slovakia, 14-18 May 2000.
- European Workshop on Gender Sensitive Statistics for Analysing Change and Development in Agriculture, Steinkjer, Norway, 7-9 June 2006.

ANNEX II

**SOME RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROJECT-RELATED ISSUES DISCUSSED DURING
WPW EXPERT MEETINGS**

- I. Rethinking approaches to gender mainstreaming:
 1. Reduction of women's vulnerability through increased and enhanced possibilities for work and incomes' generation, including self-empowerment of groups and associations;
 2. Development of gender-sensitive financial products and services to create a supportive environment for business start-up and growth;
 3. Rethinking approaches to gender mainstreaming that need to be carried out at all and different levels; consideration of activities' efficiency besides equity justifications needs to be given equal importance;
 4. The requirement for gender issues-dedicated staff needs to be considered at all stages of the project cycle and efforts made to avoid stereotype interventions; organization of activities should incorporate a life-cycle approach in projects;
 5. Continuation of the collection, analyses and dissemination of gender disaggregated statistics integrated with age disaggregation for population groups;
 6. Having an overseeing project unit located at the Ministry of Agriculture implies easier operations and implementation;
 7. Working with other partners beyond the Ministry of Agriculture can lead to major responsiveness and responsibility from the part of public administration.
 8. Vocational educational staff should be sensitized on gender equality issues, so that they do not pigeon-hole girls into stereotype courses;
 9. Documenting best practices (what worked well) and widely disseminating such information cannot be underestimated and should be budgeted for by other projects embarking on similar endeavours;
 10. NGOs working in the field should be given greater support by the respective ministries since they can often be more helpful in promoting equality between men and women.

- II. Policies and instruments for the development of products and services appropriate for female entrepreneurs:
 1. Development of products for which there is real and sustainable market demand, in the region and for export outside the region;
 2. Formal and informal action aimed at enhancing production with marketing and infrastructure development supported by different projects in the same region and organization including dissemination and training using best practices assembled in a widely accessible data base;
 3. The appropriateness of the use of credit rather than grants for entrepreneur activities should be carefully assessed taking into account ethical issues;
 4. Ecological and organic food and products: local and export market prospects; assessing growth and marketing potential; assessment approaches e.g. the food miles concept; facts and myths;
 5. The linking of traditions with innovation and support to rural livelihoods to be seen as constituents of natural resource management and conservation;
 6. Sharing experiences of EU New Member States in rural development and in accessing financial resources for rural businesses and diversification in rural areas and non-farm activities and micro loans, and experiences in linking projects with other agencies working in the region.

III. Project experience and approaches:

1. Enhancing bottom-up initiatives during project identification, formulation and implementation and support to initiatives that are connected to local values (territory) and specific available resources and skills or those to be revived;
2. Development and implementation of local workshops and seminars for, and focused on, community and interest groups' development;
3. Understanding the field situation, the clients and beneficiaries, is key for rural development initiatives;
4. Initiatives to enhance women's self-empowerment must be of equal importance to initiatives promoting product and service development.

ANNEX III

**ANNOTATED AGENDA PROPOSALS FOR THE 21ST FAO/ECA
WPW EXPERT MEETING****Migration: a pathway out of poverty or a poverty-trap?**

Rural outmigration has become a significant world-wide phenomenon acquiring especially high relevance in some regions and the Western Balkans and Central Asian countries. Migration and the role of remittances in the rural economy are particularly significant in this group of countries. Rural outmigration has far-reaching implications for these countries' rural communities and economies. Migrations involve both men and women and have different impacts depending on who migrates and who stays at home. Gender-disaggregated statistical information on migration is required to assist policymakers in formulating development agendas for regions where migration affects the rural society.

Migrations can play a crucial role in reducing poverty and abating rural-urban income disparities. However, migration is not a guaranteed pathway out of poverty; migrations can have highly negative repercussions on the migrants themselves and on the local community they leave. Thus migration can lift people out of poverty and lead to a brain gain through remittances spent on schooling but can also generate dependence on remittances that results in abandoned cultivation and deepened poverty. Migration is selective; those who leave are generally younger, better educated and more skilled. Migration is not possible for all. The poorest-of-the-poor are prevented from migrating because of high migration costs. Migration responds to income gaps between the origin and the destination. Push factors (e.g. negative shocks, a deteriorating resource base, and lack of employment) as well as pull factors (e.g. attractive employment opportunities) influence rural people in their decision for migration.

When analysing the phenomena of migration including a gender perspective the following issues need to be addressed; these could be researched, presented and discussed during the EM with a view to developing specific policy and technical assistance recommendations:

- who migrates (women/men, indigenous/non-indigenous people);
- differences in the feminization and masculinization of agriculture and poverty;
- why people migrate (push or pull factors) and to where they migrate (urban-rural/rural-urban migration);
- what is the character of migration (temporary such as seasonal, circular versus commuting; permanent; regional, international);
- what are the difficulties female/male headed households have to cope with: double and triple burdens and gender division of labour at the farm, how household livelihood strategies change;
- what are the effects of migration on the composition of the rural population: skills, age, entrepreneurship ability;
- what are the implications for the economy of the source region: for what purposes are remittances used and the multiplier effect: consumption, investment in productive activities, protecting and increasing the asset base, housing, business creation, investment in education;
- how migration and remittances impact the income distribution and labour market in source regions.

Proposed EM title: Effects of migration on the farm household's ability to achieve sustainable living standards and a better management of agricultural resources at origin.

Access to and management of rural livelihood assets with focus on increased land tenure security for women

Where women have a major role in the cultivation of land and livestock breeding, their land rights affect productivity and investment. Usually the reason why rural women's position does not improve in the long-term is because they are denied formal rights to land, have no security of tenure and no access to other productive resources. The agricultural and rural sector remains of fundamental importance in the Western Balkan and Central Asian countries. Research shows that in Central Asia inequality has increased and poverty rates are high but have increased especially in the rural areas and most of all among young women. While it is women who carry out most of the agricultural work on household plots their land rights are practically inexistent. In the Western Balkan countries economic turmoil and political instability have impeded the development and growth of the rural land market. Women have trouble asserting their rights to land primarily due to traditional cultural values. Problems related to women's lack of access to land have exacerbated in the post-conflict period when the number of women-headed households significantly increased. The number of women-headed households has also increased in many Central Asian countries due to significant male outmigration. The situation regarding female access to land and its implications for rural households and women themselves, to date, has largely gone unstudied.

The EM would address the following issues:

- Land tenure reform from gender perspectives. What is the extent to which women's needs are reflected in the first and later generations of land reforms;
- What are the major factors affecting women's access to land and what is the extent and quality of female land rights;
- What forms of land ownership exist and what is the relationship between land ownership rights and women's social exclusion;
- How can the Western Balkan and Central Asian countries benefit from a presentation of the Western and Central European countries' experience in land reform? What legislation or policies enhance women's access to land?

Women's labour on the farm and in the farm household

Making farm women's multifaceted labour visible and ensuring fair remuneration for their labour has been a long-standing topic for development research with gender focus and has been extensively discussed by FAO, the World Bank and the OECD in connection with work on rural development. With the recent changes and transformations in the Western Balkans and Central Asian countries, female farm and household labour risks remaining or falling back into invisibility and economic unrecognition or simply end up in the grey economy. In turn, in Central Asian countries women's labour input into a range of subsistence and informal activities has significantly intensified while their wage-earning opportunities have substantially decreased.

An EM concentrating on women's labour at the farm and household level would contribute to the recognition of women's labour input at the farm and at household levels including its value added component in the agricultural sector. This would enhance debate of rural gender equality by raising awareness of the complexity, dimensions and value of female labour.

Theme three should address, among other issues, the following:

- Agricultural work women do on the household plot (e.g. food crop production, livestock breeding) and commercial farm (cash crop production);
- Dimensions and value of women's household work (child nutrition, caring, etc.);
- What is the value of food produced by women on the household plot if it were to be sold at the market (data collection, assessment, implications for the household budget);
- What is the value and importance to the household budget of the income men earn on commercial farms;
- What is the distribution of time between men's and women's work on the (i) commercial farm, (ii) household plot and (iii) in the household.