



16 December  
2016  
at FAO HQ

Note for High-Level Event:

## “Step It Up Together with Rural Women to End Hunger and Poverty”

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### Background

The 2030 Agenda envisages a future we want in which no one is left behind.

Gender equality and women’s empowerment runs as an important theme throughout the Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition to SDG 5 “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”, gender equality is mainstreamed across all the SDGs. Achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment is an absolute precondition to break the cycle of poverty and hunger, and to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This ambitious and transformational vision of Agenda 2030 calls for a political and institutional shift towards gender equality.

Gender inequalities in rural societies must be addressed in order to ensure that women, men, girls and boys enjoy their rights and have equal opportunities. This requires a transformational approach to address the deep-rooted structural barriers that face rural women and girls, allowing them to become agents of change. A key way of doing this is to ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making.

Closing the gender gap in agriculture, with particular attention to access agricultural inputs, land, water and agricultural services could generate significant gains for rural peoples’ livelihoods. Enabling women to participate more effectively in agriculture translates into reduction in the number of people suffering from hunger and all forms of malnutrition. It also yields improved well-being of their children and families thereby building the human capital of future generations and contributing to long-term economic growth.

The High-Level Event “*Step It Up Together with Rural Women to End Hunger and Poverty*” will be organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the European Union (Slovak Presidency of the European Council and the European Commission), in close collaboration with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme (WFP) and UN Women. It is a contribution to the UN Women’s call of 2015 to “*Step It Up for Gender Equality*”. In particular, it will address gender gaps faced by rural women and girls, especially in the agricultural sector and will show how addressing those gaps can substantially contribute to ending food insecurity and poverty in rural areas. In this Event a particular focus will be on SDG 1 “End Poverty”, SDG 2 “Zero Hunger”, SDG 5 “Gender Equality” and SDG 17 “Partnerships”, which are central to the mandates of FAO, IFAD, UN Women and WFP.



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## Purpose

The High-level Event will offer an interactive platform for Members, UN entities, the international community, civil society and other stakeholders to address the structural causes and consequences of gender inequality in rural areas. It will provide the opportunity to identify the main challenges, gaps, opportunities and collaborative actions for unleashing the potential of rural women and girls to end food insecurity and poverty. Moreover, it will highlight what needs to be done differently to achieve the 2030 vision for rural women and girls. In order to achieve concrete results, the discussions will focus on two important and inter-linking areas: (i) Promoting rural women's economic empowerment; and (ii) Putting into practice a gender transformative approach.

## Structure of the Event

1. **Opening session** with high-level participation.
2. **High-level Panel** (TBC) will introduce the central role of gender equality and women's empowerment for effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with a special focus on SDGs 1, 2, 5 and 17.
3. **Two round table sessions.** These will be structured around two tables of panellists who will each speak for a set time, after which audience participants can engage. The first round table will focus on promoting rural women's economic empowerment and the second on gender transformative approaches. Each Roundtable will be followed by a summary of the discussions.



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