

## V. Empowering women and girls and promoting gender equality

**DATE:** 24 October 2023

**TIME:** 10.00-13.00 (exact time to be advised)

**LOCATION:** FAO Headquarters, Rome

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**NOTE:** the following statement has been split up into three (1-min speeches) to be shared among: Emmastella Wangui Gakuo, Janice Giddens, and Anne Terhorst

### **Statement by Emmastella Wangui Gakuo, Co-founder of the Savanna Circuit Technologies, and member of the CFS Private Sector Mechanism**

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, and esteemed colleagues,

It is my sincere pleasure to intervene on behalf of the Private Sector Mechanism and particularly to have the opportunity to speak on the topic of women's and girls' participation and empowerment in agriculture and celebrate the endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment.

As the co-founder of Savanna Circuit, a technology company based in Kenya that manufactures and distributes vital solar cooling and value addition solutions for dairy, I can only underline the importance of giving women the access and tools to thrive in the agricultural sector. For example, greater investment and access to innovations (small and large) leads to greater empowerment and increased livelihoods. The Kenyan women farmers who are now entrepreneurs have experienced improved incomes, due to reduced milk post-harvest losses, thanks to our mobile chillers.

That is a concrete reminder that what is discussed at CFS is concrete to us in-country. For this reason, let me thank you Chair, the Secretariat, and all stakeholders involved in this process for the dedication and commitment these past years to highlight the guidelines we endorse today, which we hope will positively contribute to the plight of women in agriculture, and consequently, impact the food security and nutrition for all.

An additional thanks is also due to those member states that made the additional investment in this workstream by dedicating their delegates to pushing this valuable work forward. We are grateful for those representations recognizing the importance of the topic and prioritizing gender and women's empowerment over a myriad of other issues.

**Continuing statement by Janice Giddens, Vice President of Sustainable Nutrition  
at the U.S. Dairy Export Council and member of PSM**

It is a pleasure to follow on from the insightful remarks by Emmastella. My name is Janice Giddens, I am a PSM member and Vice President of Sustainable Nutrition at the U.S. Dairy Export Council. Let me start by clearly stressing the work is not done.

As we know there are a multiple range of issues that affect women in agrifood systems today and hinder their effective participation and this was made very clear by the FAO report, The Status of Women in Agrifood Systems, which highlighted the many inequalities women experience that need to be addressed within agrifood systems.

The report notes that “globally, women are estimated to account for around 53 percent of all retail trade workers in agrifood systems. The same study also found that women trade in less-profitable commodities than men and achieve lower profits overall. This demonstrates one of many inequalities that women experience and needs to be addressed within agrifood systems. The critical role that trade can play in improving women’s food and nutrition security and livelihoods, while also bolstering the sustainability and resilience of food systems should be further examined to better support women and their needs.

We hope these voluntary guidelines can certainly complement the body of research and will be top of mind in future gender programmatic activities promoted by FAO.

If we may provide a suggestion to improve future CFS outputs, it would be to ask that these outputs take on and reinforce the recommendations on other topics in order to promote greater food security and nutrition. I say this because it is unfortunate that the Data recommendations which are also being endorsed at this year’s plenary makes one singular reference to the specific consideration of women and youth in data equity. Let’s ensure we are not talking about these critical and cross-cutting issues in a siloed manner.

**Concluding statement by Anne Terhorst, NGIN ambassador, I4nature**

Thank you chair. My name is Anne Terhorst. I am thrilled to provide some concluding remarks.

I am here on behalf of PSM, but also as a member of the Next Generation Agriculture Impact Network, which is a multi-stakeholder platform *with* and for youth.

Over the last days I have appreciated the opportunity as a woman and youth to discuss this topic that is so close to me.

Empowerment of women and girls is vital to realize food security as well as the transformation towards a sustainable food systems.

I am very happy to see that the topic is on the agenda of governments, NGOs, and the private sector. But it must remain there.

It is crucial that we keep working on reducing gender inequalities. Still there are many places all around the world where women empowerment remains an empty term.

Women who stand the most to benefit from empowerment are often not part of the dialogue, as is also the case for youth. They need to be included in this co-creation process.

But, it is not just about women's empowerment, it is ALSO about the feminine characteristics and feminine leadership which is crucial. We need a new type of leadership!

So, let us remember: women's empowerment is not something that is done only through projects, but also in everybody's daily life.

Next week when you are back to work, ask yourself: “How can I contribute to gender equality and women’s empowerment?”

What do I need to unlearn to reach equality?

And what can I learn from feminine leadership?

We look forward to continuing this discussion in the upcoming CFS workstreams.

THANK YOU

End of statement.