

SE07: Empowering Women in Agriculture – Entrepreneurs, Food Systems Leaders, and Agents of Change

Organized by: Mexico, as coordinator of MIKTA, with the collaboration of Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Türkiye and Australia.

Summary of the side event

The side event highlighted policies implemented by MIKTA countries to promote gender inclusion in food systems, under the *CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girl's Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition*. The objectives were:

- 1) highlight the role of women as leaders and entrepreneurs in agriculture;
- 2) present strategies that promote gender inclusion and empowerment in line with the voluntary guidelines; and
- 3) inspire stakeholders to unlock the potential of women to transform food systems.

The side event, moderated by Dr. Clara Park, FAO Gender Senior Officer, began with a message from Amb. Miguel Ruiz-Cabañas, Senior Advisor to the Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico. He referred to the commitment of MIKTA to women's rights and gender equality. He recognized CFS as the ideal forum to discuss the empowerment of women in agriculture and the relevance of the voluntary guidelines.

Mr. Alan Elizondo, Director General of Trust Funds for Rural Development (FIRA) of Mexico, presented an overview of FIRA and its financial programs. He stated that the Supplier Development Program has financed 30,000 women in Mexico and shared the case of Mexican women who produce honey with FIRA support, allowing them to access international markets.

Ms. Lastiana Yuliandari, founder of Aliet Green, indicated that her business is producing regenerative agricultural products and improving the well-being and resilience of communities in Indonesia. Her company works with more than 1,500 small family farms, most of them owned by women. She mentioned climate change as a challenge and the importance of addressing it with technical solutions and policy support.

Ms. Dawoom Park, Deputy Director at the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) of the Republic of Korea, presented the legal framework and implementation system developed for empowering women, enhance their participation in decision-making processes, and create a women-friendly agricultural work environment, complemented with educational programs and permanent governmental support.

Ms. Özge İmamoğlu, Head of the Department of International Organizations of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Türkiye, mentioned the policies implemented by her country to support women with financial and educational resources. She also indicated that climate change is a risk for food systems and underlined the collaboration with FAO to enhance the participation of rural women in agriculture.

Ms. Pippa Jones, a livestock and crop farmer from Australia, recognized the importance of women as entrepreneurs and leaders in agriculture. She highlighted the positive impact of mentors and role models, underlining the importance of networks, scholarships, and governmental support at the federal and state levels to help women become leaders in the agricultural sector.

Dr. Lauren Phillips, FAO Deputy Director General of Rural Transformation and Gender Equality, mentioned the importance of voluntary guidelines to close gender gaps. She pointed out that FAO is working with several countries on the guidelines implementation, while underlined the importance of the *Commit to Grow Equality* initiative to address gender equality.

In his closing remarks, the Permanent Representative of Mexico, Amb. Miguel García Winder, stated that the MIKTA countries have valuable experiences regarding the empowerment of women and their role in agrifood systems. He indicated the importance of FAO sharing experiences and creating networks between women from different countries.