

SE19: Translating the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition into action: impactful collaborations with the Private Sector and Government

Organized by: Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division, Partnerships and UN Collaboration Division (PSU), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Agri-Food Network (IAFN).

Summary of the side event

This side event highlighted examples of collaborations with the private sector and government for the implementation of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment (VG-GEWGE) in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition, endorsed in 2023.

The panel was moderated by Lauren Phillips, Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division Deputy Director, and was composed by:

- Fatouma Seid, Deputy Director, PSU, FAO (Opening)
- Maya Patole, Managing Director, State Women's Development Corporation of Government of Maharashtra (MAVIM)
- Beatrice Gerli, Senior Gender and Targeting Specialist, IFAD
- Robynne Anderson, CFS Private Sector Mechanism (PSM) Secretariat
- Clara Park, Senior Gender Officer, FAO
- Loise Maina, Lead Gender and Targeting Technical Specialist, IFAD (Closing)

Fatouma Seid highlighted two fundamental aspects for the successful implementation of the VG-GEWGE: 1) Innovative, inclusive and

impactful partnerships, and 2) increased targeted investments. The PSU Deputy Director also highlighted the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls not only for their own benefit and rights, but for the benefit of all humankind, “because the limitations on women are hindering progress on food security for everyone”.

Maya Patole and Beatrice Gerli opened the panel discussion by highlighting MAVIM’s collaboration with IFAD to build climate-resilient rural communities through the IFAD Gender Transformative Mechanism (GTM). The GTM highlights the climate and gender nexus and has achieved significant results in India by collaborating closely with MAVIM.

Robynne Anderson shifted the conversation’s focus to private sector partnerships, using as an example the FAO-IAFN Accelerator Mentorship Programme for Women-led SMEs in Africa. The Programme recently launched its third cohort and has made an impact in the lives of over 150 women entrepreneurs in sub-Saharan Africa since its launch in 2022. “We believe that entrepreneurship is an important portal for women to be successful in the agrifood sector,” said Robynne. 1500 applications for the programme were received this year, demonstrating the concrete need for the scaling-up of such initiatives in this region and beyond.

Clara Park highlighted the results of the Empowering women and boosting livelihoods through agricultural trade: Leveraging the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) (EWAT) project, which seeks to empower women to seize new trade opportunities in the context of the new free trade area. Through this intervention, a strong focus was also placed on discriminatory social norms which hinder women’s development and success in agrifood systems. Tackling the root causes of compounding, intersecting gender inequalities is essential for the wellbeing of all women and girls – as well as men and boys – in agrifood systems and beyond.

Loise Maina wrapped up the event by underscoring the value of the VG-GEWGE and the opportunities that lie within its implementation. “We must continue translating these guidelines into policy and also into practice, and also into progress. [We] are ready to support this transformation, working alongside our partners and sister agencies to ensure that women and girls are empowered to drive food security solutions in every corner of the world”, she concluded.

For more information, access the event recording online.