

## SE36: Reducing Inequalities in food systems by expanding market access for inputs, outputs, and services

Organized by: The Republic of Indonesia, the Global Dairy Platform, Pinion, the Private Sector Mechanism and, Nuffield International.

Inequalities in food systems exist for many interrelated reasons and are one of the primary causes of poverty, hunger and malnutrition. CFS's Policy Guidelines on Engaging Youth in Agriculture and Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition calls on all actors to promote private and social enterprise and entrepreneurship through education programs, capacity building, mentorship coaching and access to finance.

One of the greatest drivers of inequalities in food systems is a lack of market access for agricultural inputs, services and production outputs. Insufficient access to fertilizers, necessary crop control products, insufficient infrastructure and poor extension services affect the most vulnerable populations the most. It is widely known that the creation of agricultural enterprises at local and community level is four times more effective at alleviating poverty and hunger than conventional aid.

Despite this, a gap of understanding often exists between policy makers and those who develop and implement programs that create self-sustaining enterprises that employ people and advance their economic, social outcomes while bringing new products and services to market.

The Moderator, Mr Karol Kissane, Nuffield International, introduced Mr. Purna Cita Nugraha, Counsellor, Alternate Permanent Representative of Indonesia to FAO whose Opening Remarks highlighted the importance of the CFS Policy Recommendations and, in particular, paragraph 14, which recommended to: "Invest in expanding decent rural farm and non-farm employment and livelihood opportunities, particularly for women and youth, including by investing in enterprise, entrepreneurship, smallholders and family farming to ensure that equitable, decent and inclusive income generating opportunities exist, including outside of agriculture; (farm and non-farm employment)" He emphasised the importance of this recommendation and that it should be closely monitored by CFS members and, suggested it should be revisited annually.

This was followed by Mr Olawole Tunmise Olagbaju, Managing Director, Real People Concept who emphasised the importance of the provision of inputs into the agriculture sector in Nigeria, particularly in the form of technology and providing ‘training communities’ that focussed on women and youth. The next speaker, Jeanne Bernick, Principal, Growth Leader, Pinion provided examples of how farm advisory and accounting services could help women assume greater leadership roles in the farm. Importantly, she raised the issue of how farms and agri-businesses need to incorporate more women into succession planning.

Donald Moore, Executive Director, Global Dairy Platform explained how the ‘Dairy Nourishes Africa’ initiative in Tanzania impacted nutrition levels, particularly in young children by both increasing the availability of milk & milk products and by driving the programme through the leadership of women. This was further developed by Marjorie Lambert, Nuffield International who illustrated from her farming experience in Northern France how the Nuffield Farming Scholars program specifically targets capacity building to reduce inequalities among rural farmers by building those farmers (and rural enterprises) into groups to share knowledge, agree common programmes and advocate more broadly in the community.

In his closing remarks, Michael Keller, Secretary General of the International Seed Federation Former IAFN Chair noted how the FAO-IAFN SME Accelerator Program for women entrepreneurs in sub-Saharan Africa work was empowering women-led agribusinesses and how this demonstrated that entrepreneurship and small and medium enterprises could act to drive economic development in rural areas in ways that reduce inequalities and improves the food and nutrition security outcomes of rural people and the most vulnerable.