

15 October AM

IV. CELEBRATING THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF RURAL WOMEN

Mr Mario ALVERO, CHAIRPERSON, CFS

Good morning. Good morning everyone and welcome to this second day of the Committee on World Food Security. Today, of course, is the International Day of Rural Women. A happy coincidence that within this week that we are holding the 46th Session on the Committee on World Security, we are also celebrating World Food Day, the 16th of October tomorrow as well as the International Day of Rural Women that is the 15th of October, in other words, today.

So we send out very warmest congratulations from Rome to all of those women who are helping to support the food security nutrition situation of their families, their countries and the entire world. I hope that you all managed to rest well last night having taken part in yesterday's side events late in the afternoon and also the ones which were held early this morning and I hope that you have all recharged your batteries for what is going to be a very interesting day's work and I am sure it is going to be very enriching for all of us and will help to move us forward towards SDG2 Zero Hunger and in fact all of the sustainable development goals.

Those of you who were here at the end of yesterday's meeting will remember that we ran out of interpreting time and were not able to conclude with the Chair's summary on theme 3 and we said that was going to be the first issue that we would pick up on today this morning. That we would finish it this morning in other words, the Vice-President of IFAD, Mrs Cornelia Richter however for reasons related to her job has to leave before it was planned and we don't want to lose her for Item 4, which is the International Day of Rural Women. So our proposal is the following:

We still have not completed Item 3;

We still have not concluded the question of the Chair's summary that is still pending.

Now there were two meetings held with the legal office last night, we asked them from a legal point of view if they could point us in the possible direction so that we can take a political decision on this issue here in plenary. So what we are going to do is keep that point pending, it is still open, not to discuss it once again, but to conclude that specific issue of the Chair's summary because as I say we have had the panel, the questions were asked, the answers were provided, we had the debate.

What is going to happen now is on the Chair's summary, which is going to be frozen. It is going to put on ice, if I can put it that way before we conclude Item 4, the International Day of Rural Women before we actually deal with the Chair's summary on that item we will address the Chair's summary on the previous issue and this one at the same time. That is because we do not want to lose the panel, which has been prepared over many months.

So as I announced yesterday, I have asked the Vice President, Ms Valentina Savastano of Italy, the Vice-Chair of our committee to deal with this. I am going to go with the delegation from the Dominican Republic and follow events from there. So what we are going to do now is deal with Item 4, the International Day of Rural Women. We have a very interesting panel. I am sure it is going to be a very interesting debate and when we arrive at the point of the summary for this issue I will come back to the top table and I will speak to all of you so that we can decide on the process for the Chair's summary and we will also deal with the Chair's summary on Item 3 together with Item 4, which will give us a basis for the Chair's summary for all of the other issues. So Valentina if you could come and step up, please.

Ms Valentina SAVASTANO, Vice-Chairperson, CFS

Good morning to everyone, thank you Chair and let me say that a few weeks ago the CFS Chair approached me and asked me if I wanted to chair this session. I immediately embraced the idea and welcomed the suggestion to celebrate International Day of Rural Women with an all-women podium except for the Secretary.

We all know the critical role women play for food security; they grow much of our food, strengthen our economies and are the forefront of adapting to the effects of climate change. So let me start welcoming the speakers with whom I will share the podium this morning. Our first speaker is Cornelia Richter, Vice-President of IFAD; she will introduce the team of this session and set the scene for the two keynote speakers. For the two keynotes, I am honoured to share the podium with Ms Kate Gilmore, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights and Ms Fatoumata Diallo, Vice-President of the National Federation of Rural Women of Mali.

I now leave the floor to Ms Cornelia Richter followed with the keynotes that will open the floor for any brief intervention from the floor. Cornelia, the floor is yours.

Ms Cornelia RICHTER, Vice-President, IFAD

Thank you, Valentina. Distinguished delegates, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, an estimated 1.7 billion women and girls live in rural areas. That is more than 1/5th of humanity. Globally, one in three employed women work in agriculture, including forestry and fishing. They contribute substantially to agricultural production. And they perform the biggest share of unpaid care and domestic work within rural households. Despite their important role in rural societies, rural women and girls continue to face multiple challenges and discrimination. They are constrained in decision making by structure barriers and discriminatory social and cultural norms.

Climate exacerbates existing inequalities. The World Health Organisation reports, for example, that droughts in developing countries bring health hazards through reduced availability of water for drinking, cooking and hygiene. Women and girls (and their children) disproportionately suffer the health consequences of nutritional deficiencies and the burdens associated with travelling further to collect water. Insecure land rights, or the low quality of land plots, compromise women's climate resilience. Their lack of access to resources and assets reduces their capacity to withstand extreme weather events and the effects of climate change.

The report of the United Nations Secretary-General on "improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural areas" highlights that on virtually every gender and development indicator, rural women fair worse than both rural men and urban women.

But most, given the chance, can help build a better world - for themselves, for their families and for their communities. Rural women and girls are powerful agents of change and to transform rural livelihoods. A

recent study of five sub-Saharan countries found that closing the gender gap in agricultural productivity corresponds to an estimated increase in crop production of between 7 and 19 per cent.

Women make up a full 50 per cent of people reached by the projects IFAD supports. To better address the needs of rural women and girls, we have refined our targeting guidelines this year. Gender equality is one of IFAD's four key mainstreaming areas because we know that economies that are more gender equal in terms of opportunities and benefits achieve faster economic growth and better quality of life for all.

Let me share one example of our work with you: Tajikistan's geography is extremely challenging for sustainable farming. Over half the country is at an altitude of 3000 metres or more. IFAD's livestock and pasture development project has increased the income of 24000 poor rural households by enhancing livestock productivity. Specific training and input packages target women-headed households, which have increased their livestock income by 47 per cent.

There are many meaningful examples of how empowering women and improving their access to resources deliver economic and social benefits. But let us not forget: gender equality is a human right. At IFAD, we therefore also address underlying causes of inequality within the households through gender transformative approaches.

For example, under our Adaptation for Smallholder Agricultural Programme, we fund pilots of enhanced gender actual learning system in Madagascar. These pilot programmes enable women and men to work together to improve their relations, achieve more equitable workloads and jointly identify solutions for shared challenges, such as those also rising from climate change.

Throughout our work, we have learnt that empowering rural women and girls is both possible and essential - especially in response to climate change. We have identified four steps to empower women further:

First, integrate a gender perspective into climate change policies and involve women in decision making at all levels on environmental and agricultural issues.

Second, ensure rural women and men have full and equal rights and equal access to and security of land and productive resources.

Third, improve the access of rural women and girls to safe reliable water supply, sustainable energy and information and communication technologies to build their climate resilience.

Finally, build the knowledge and skill of all rural women to boost their capacities, confidence and bargaining power.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would now like to introduce the first keynote speaker, Kate Gilmore who has been the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights since the end of 2015. She has deep experience in strategic leadership and human rights advocacy with the United Nations, with government and non-governmental organisations including the United Nations Population Fund and Amnesty International. Her roots are in social work and for some years her work has focused on prevention of violence against women. For example, she helped establish Australia's first Centre Against Sexual Assault at Melbourne's Royal Women's Hospital. Ms Gilmore holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of New England and postgraduate degrees in social work from the University of Melbourne and now we are looking forward to hearing from you Kate about the challenges and opportunities for women for a human rights perspective.

Ms Kate GILMORE, OHCHR

Thank you very much indeed. Dear Moderator, dear Chair, thank you for the privilege of these excellencies, distinguished colleagues, friends. I bring you the warmest greetings of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, who asked me specifically to thank you for your

leadership. To thank you for the leadership that together you provide so that globally norm standards, science and evidence may underpin security of the right to enjoy the right to food.

It is a particular honour, therefore, to join you on this International Day of Rural Women and to examine with you the circumstances of those for whom distance isolates hard unseen labour in traps whose location and status means they are more excluded. To consider with you how better to stand with rural women whose industry in organisation, participation and contribution is just so central to the health wellbeing sustenance and sustainability of communities large and small near and far the world over.

Excellency's, for the first time in human history more of us than ever before, are urban residents. More of us are dependent on land that we do not farm, on livestock that we do not tend, feed, slaughter, on harvests that we do not gather. In these changing food systems en route from land to farm to plate it is the labour of contribution of rural women a quarter of the world's population on whom increasingly our food security depends.

Even in the face of industrial-scale agriculture rural women remain crucial, critical to the daily operations of rural communities, essential to protection of rural families, vital in defending rural ecosystems under strain of climate crises. That their contributions are so essential only makes it more inexplicable just how disregarded they have been in legislation and public policymaking, makes more unconscionable just how disproportionately they have been left to suffer precarious labour conditions, their rights to land unrecognised. Their access to water, to fertilisers, to seed, to credit, to training more limited just how unacceptable it is still that systematic discrimination pushes them into the margins of influence of participation and of access in both the global north and the global south.

This backdrop of gender inequality leaves rural women doubly disadvantaged in the context of climate instability. Friends, there is so much that is specific, unaccepted, exceptional about climate instability, global warming and the impacts of unchecked consumption, but there is nothing unfamiliar whatsoever about gender-based discrimination is impeding effective inclusion of women in climate action about we just must uphold equal rights to participation, to protection from attack when claiming rights, justice when rights are derailed or denied.

This is not nearly about new science and new rules this is about longstanding law. After all, it is Member States who have given us that law, the normative and policy tools we have to hand to fix this. The convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, a legally binding treaty has issued landmark practical advice on how better to protect the rights of women to rural land and natural resources.

On the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction standards underscored by the gift of the recent U.N. declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas. Standards illuminated by the work of the wonderful special repertoire on the right to food. For your work as a committee on World Food Security that human rights framework gifted to us by Member States offers credibility, stability and authority of normative standards set by the international community on which more effective national and regional law and public policy can stand.

More stability on which to stand up efforts to better address discriminatory practices, to better deploy legislation to guarantee rights to land, to water and to natural resources for women irrespective of their civil and marital status. To better protect social protection, to better promote public participation of and for rural women.

Excellency's, in adopting the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Member States promised to leave no one behind. Rural women are far behind we can't accept it, we can't leave them there and your multi-

stakeholder partnership is just essential to transform the reality, to fulfil the promise including by bringing the voices of rural women to the table.

If women farmers have access to the same resources as to men there would be at least 150 million fewer hungry people. Greater food security demands greater human security specifically for rural women. My mother taught me 'waste not, want not'. We simply cannot afford to continue to waste the full potential of the talent creativity, contribution, participation of rural women and girls. I thank you.

Ms Cornelia RICHTER, Vice-President, IFAD

Thank you very much, Kate for your very strong messages from the human rights perspective and I think you have really provided food for thought for us and now I think it is time to listen to a completely different perspective. I am happy to have next to me Madame Fatoumata Diallo; she is the Vice-President of the National Federation of Rural Women of Mali.

Fatoumata is a farmer and she supports the efforts and energies of rural women in Mali. She has been particularly active in the fisheries sector. Together with others, she founded her first fisher's organisation in 1991. In 2009 she helped establish the National Union of Women Working in the Fish Sector in Mali. From 47 cooperatives initially, it has expanded to more than 250 cooperatives and to other agricultural activities beyond fishery. Through her work Fatoumata Diallo encourages women farmers, trains them in processing agricultural products and helps them innovate when land and assets are scarce.

Madame Diallo, we are looking forward to your presentation and to hear from your wealth of experience about how to support women's economic activities.

Ms Fatoumata DIALLO, National Federation of Rural Woman of Mali

Thank you very much indeed, Madame Vice-President. My sisters, rural women from around the world, distinguished guests; good morning. It is a great honour and a privilege for me to speak to this assembly on behalf of all rural women from around the entire world.

First and foremost, I would like to thank the international community for having, for some time now, recognised the major role played by rural women in the area of household food security and nutrition as well as their major contribution to the rural economy around the world. In developing countries, women represent on average about 40 per cent of the average population working in the agricultural sector. That percentage varies from one region to another, from 20 per cent in Latin America to 50 per cent in Asia and the Pacific and over 50 per cent in certain areas of Africa and Asia.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the share of women in this active agricultural population continues to increase. It is estimated, globally, at 55 percent in a growing rural world, which is characterised by the rural exodus and clandestine immigration of young people, with its share of those lost at sea, as well as the effects of climate change, which are forcing increasing numbers of people, men in particular, to leave agriculture and rural areas.

Whilst women play a major role in ensuring household stability, we also have to bear in mind that they are still marginalised despite the efforts deployed by governments and partners. Gender-based inequalities still exist and are persisting in certain regions of Africa and Asia; these inequalities are reflected in limited access for women to productive resources including land, good quality inputs, financial services, innovatory techniques and technologies and markets.

These constraints seriously affect the productive ability of women, the effectiveness of their economic initiatives and their entrepreneurship, and their leadership in decision making circles, both in the private sphere and also at public level, in organisations and other rural institutions. Limited access for women to

the factors of production combined with a fragile agro-ecological environment slow down their contribution to productive activities. Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, I am sure you would agree with me on the scale of the challenge we are called upon to face if we are to achieve the aim of zero hunger by 2030.

As we discussed at length yesterday in respect of the 2019 report on food security and nutrition, the figures speak volumes in respect of this serious situation. This is what is happening out in the field, this is what our rural women are facing on a daily basis. I am convinced as a rural woman, and this applies to all rural women wherever they may be in the world, particularly in Africa, that we have to find opportunities out of the challenges. We have to adopt a different approach, which sees the rural woman as being a solution to lift these millions of adults and children out of food insecurity and malnutrition.

We should, therefore, strengthen the productive capacity of rural women allowing them to have increased access to agricultural inputs, such as serviced land, for example, quality inputs at the right time, water, agricultural credit, innovative agricultural services, equipment, technology etcetera. We have to allow them to become literate, to be trained and well-equipped to best access information, knowledge, know-how and to have a good grasp of new technology. They have to be able to make the most of surplus production using modern agro-food processing units, which meet the quality standards required by the market. We have to strengthen their leadership in the domestic and public spheres, in agricultural organisations, rural institutions and decentralised communities.

By 2030, all of the SDG's must be achieved. That was a commitment made by governments, the international community and civil society. So I call on the governments to reach out more boldly towards rural women through pivotal and more ambitious programmes, which will address head-on the objective constraints faced by rural women. This should allow them to achieve their full economic potential in increasing their food crop production and improving food security and nutrition in rural households.

The Voluntary Guidelines, if I can remind you of this, on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security are useful instruments, which encourage responsible tenure of lands, fisheries and forests whatever the system which applies, public, private, communal, indigenous, tribal or even informal. I would, therefore, call on rural women around the entire world to embrace those voluntary guidelines and the CFS guidelines on tenure.

I would invite them to become totally familiar with these instruments so that they can have a fruitful dialogue with their respective governments. Through the various different core and umbrella organisations, rural women should continue to be a driving force through proposals and questions in order to strengthen their role and their contribution to food security and nutrition and ensure that that role is better tapped into by governments and international institutions.

The instruments, the tools are there, I am sure you would all agree with me. So we all now have to act to implement them to transform the rural world into a rural world without hunger. In order to ensure food security for everyone and really make sure that there is a right to food for everyone, long live rural women from around the world and thank you very much indeed for your attention.

Ms Valentina SAVASTANO, Vice-Chairperson, CFS

Thank you very much indeed for those really passionate words and for your leadership in promoting the rights of rural women. Now I open the floor for any interventions and comments, I recommend you to be brief so as to hear as many interventions as possible and to press your button so that you can...

Okay, thank you, now we will give the floor to PSM, then to Egypt and then to CSM. I will really recommend you to be brief and if you have any question please specify to whom on the podium you would like to have an answer from and we will have a very short round of answers, thank you. So now I give the floor to PSM.

PSM

Thank you Chair for giving me the floor, my name is Nikki Chaudhary and I'm a young dairy farmer from India. So I am honoured to speak on behalf of PSM and pleased to highlight that our delegation this year is 51 person women. Although gender and women are mentioned sparingly in the SOFI report, none of you can deny the relevance of women as stated in the SOFI report.

While many will focus on increasing numbers of hungry 820 million people in the world, equally telling is a gender gap with the prevalence of food insecurity higher among women than men. Now this aspect combined with the substantial proportion of women in the agricultural labour force, unpaid work and informal work means their potential contribution to food security and nutrition has been untapped. As well as the nutritional needs in the first 1000 days and the prevalence of anaemia needs to be tackled with good nutrition including from livestock derived foods.

Now with one out of every three women being employed in agriculture the sector more at a risk of climate change though food security of rural women and girls is impacted adversely, the PSM urges the CFS to highlight the cross-cutting role of rural women in agriculture and address their challenge in order to tap the relevance and to tap their invaluable contribution.

So the recommendations that address these smallholders must be tailored to women in order to improve their access to markets, adaptation and adoption of appropriate technologies, institutional innovations and improved access to natural financial and human capital, thank you.

Ms Valentina SAVASTANO, Vice-Chairperson, CFS

Thank you, PSM, I give now the floor to Egypt.

Egypt

Good morning. In truth, I wish to thank the CFS for its kind invitation, which was addressed to me to participate in this very important forum. I wish to relay to you the greetings of the Ministry of Agriculture in Egypt. I also wish to thank the ladies who took the floor for their excellent expose on the experience they have in this sector.

I speak of a successful experiment in Egypt, which allowed us to take advantage to the best of the capacities of rural women in Egypt. This project trained rural women and transferred a huge quantity of information to rural families whether in the field of sanitation or health, the preparation of healthy meals that comprise all nutrients as well as training them on carrying out small projects.

We also facilitated the role of women in participating in all activities in the family. We trained women on how to take advantage of irrigation systems and recycling of waste, we also raised the awareness among rural families on how to overcome the issues deriving from climate change. Many ladies carried out small projects; we also carried out projects for overcoming illiteracy. This experience is one of the success stories and it is financed by the Egyptian Government. We always hope that rural women will have success in all fields of life and we support the role not only in food security but in all fields. Rural women are the cornerstone of families and society as a whole, especially in rural areas.

I speak especially of rural areas in Egypt; SDG's 2030 strategy in Egypt insists on the importance of women and allows women to play an important role in all areas, including leadership areas. We have a deputy minister who is a lady, who is a woman in the Ministry of Agriculture. We wish to thank you for giving me the floor.

Ms Valentina SAVASTANO, Vice-Chairperson, CFS

Thank you, Egypt, now I give the floor to CSM and then to Burkina Faso, CSM please you have the floor.

CSM

Good morning, my name is Sylvia Diywili, I am from Mozambique of World March of Women and I am here in consideration of CSM. It is shocking that 820 million people are living with hunger, majority of them as a woman in every region. We believe that current global food system builds on and reinforces gender-based discrimination and violence of women's rights.

Patriarchy continues to control the lives of women and especially young women like me. Demand for land rights is at the heart of the struggle for women's right. We also demand access and control over our boards, our incomes, productive resources and control of our markets.

Agroecology is a feminist alternative in the fight against hunger and patriarchy. In the upcoming MYPoW workstream on gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition, we must build from the demands of women, ensure they are leading the process. For us, empowerment for women is not equal to women's rights. We are empowered, we support the CEDAW general recommendation 34 on rights of rural women. We the CSM Women's Constituency are prepared to work with you on the upcoming MYPoW workstream of women's rights. Thank you.

Ms Valentina SAVASTANO, Vice-Chairperson, CFS

Thank you CSM, I now give the floor to Burkina Faso.

Burkina Faso

Thank you, Augustine Denise Bado is my name from Burkina Faso. I would like to thank the CFS for the invitation and also for having organised this meeting celebrating the international day on the sidelines of this session and also first and foremost for having included rural women. I think that is excellent initiative.

I would like to congratulate Ms Diallo for speaking out so clearly on behalf of rural women. I would also like to inform you that Burkina Faso is celebrating the International Day of Rural Women under the high patronage of the First Lady of Burkina Faso. So that was for the African Union, thank you.

Ms Valentina SAVASTANO, Vice-Chairperson, CFS

Okay, I don't have any other interventions on the screen. Oh yes, I have... sorry I forgot, thank you.

South Africa

Thank you very much, my surname is Dasa, I am from the Republic of South Africa. Having listened attentively and tried to sort of understand the issues as they are being presented I just wanted to check as I am checking across the panel, not so much focus on individuals. I just wanted to find out exactly how migrants and internally displaced women found in rural areas are catered for, that is, within our own policies and practices. Thank you very much.

Ms Valentina SAVASTANO, Vice-Chairperson, CFS

Thank you, South Africa, now we have other requests of interventions, but it is very unfortunate that we really have to close the time for an intervention. We are supposed to close at 10:55. So I am sorry I cannot give the floor to the countries and organisations that asked for the floor and as anticipated the conclusions of this session will be regulated by the Chair. So I will ask now the Chair to come back on the podium and would like really to thank all the speakers on the podium and you all for your comments, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you. Thank you for your patience as also I was going over this issue with the Secretary because like I said at the outset we have conducted several meetings with the legal office ever since we had to adjourn because of time yesterday and as I explained before going into Item 4, International Day of Rural Women what we have on the table is the need for agreement at CFS on the Chair's summary for the previous item, Item 3, CFS and the sustainable development goals lessons learned and, of course, bridge to the Chair's summary for celebrating the International Day of Rural Women.