



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

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**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”**

### **Statement submitted by Organizzazione Mondiale Degli Agricoltoria, non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

United Nations in collaboration with its specialized Agencies and several stakeholder platforms, adopted the 2030 Agenda, which includes 17 goals for the sustainable development of the planet to be achieved in the next 15 years.

The Sustainable Development Goals are to support development and growth, where today's needs are fulfilled without destroying future generations' possibilities, under the overall principle of "leave no one behind". The Sustainable Development Goal overall aim is to remove extreme poverty and to support sustainable development from the human welfare, economic growth, environment and earth sustainability sake. Family farmers are at the heart of the new Sustainable Development Goals. Especially the goals to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality, and the empowerment of girls and women require food security, among many other things. Naturally family farms have a crucial role in achieving the food security.

While the Millennium Development Goals targeted the developing countries, the Sustainable Development Goals are universal and global in geographical terms, including countries from developing and developed countries.

Actions are required from everyone: how to make the world more sustainable in economic, social and environmental dimensions?

Among the Sustainable Development Goals, goal number 2 "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture" directly targets agriculture. However, there are many other goals that are linked to farming and forestry. For example, the water management (Goal 6), sustainable consumption and production (Goal 12) and ecosystem and biodiversity goals (Goal 15) are closely affecting family farms.

As women are responsible for more than half of the food production of the world, the food security goal is impossible to achieve unless we pay special attention to the gender equality, as well as, to women's rights.

Many studies have proved that when women are in charge of the farm and directly manage the returns, they invest more on the family and the farm development. As mentioned, gender equality is one of the key targets in the Sustainable Development Goals, as it is strictly linked to the food security goal. As achieving food security requires investments: there's no sustainability without developing the farm to ensure the future of the farm. In many countries a special attention need to be targeted to the women's access to financing and investments. The real development requires equal rights!

Farmer organizations in many countries indicate that one big problem for the future of family farms is the low attraction of farming. This might be one obstacle in achieving the real sustainability in agriculture: it cannot be called sustainable in all its dimensions if there are not enough young people to carry on the family farms. The development of agriculture and forestry has to be in the heart of the new Sustainable Development Goals to ensure the food security and other goals that are related to agriculture and forestry.

If the children, both girls and boys, are not sent to school to make sure they will stay in the village and in the farm, it will ruin the sustainability in person's own life and in the development of the agriculture. If the farming is developed enough, it will ensure proper income and decent living conditions for the farming family – and encourage young people to take over the farm instead of moving to the cities.

Economic and social isolation combined with less access to services creates a harder life for women in the rural areas. To improve their conditions investment is needed in education, adult training and local services. Financial independence through rural activities combined with training and the willpower of women organizations contribute to strengthening rural women participation in decision making and local politics. All these points are vital for the future of rural communities and need investment and encouragement from governments worldwide.

Indeed, one of the element characterizing rural areas is that of accessibility, in terms of easiness to access to all those services which represent common facilities for people living in urban centres. Therefore, existing differences in education between rural and urban regions is a crucial task in order to improve gender equality.

Women are moving from rural areas due to the fact they have to find remunerated job. Women in rural areas are often isolated and without any form of knowledge.

Compared to urban women rural women have:

- Low education
- Few services
- Low quality of life
- Social isolation

It is necessary to promote:

- Education

Professional development / training / education for women farmers is essential so they can assume responsibilities and ensure farms can be adapted to new developments.

Innovation will be all the more crucial for rural areas in the years to come, as we will have to face the dual challenge of population growth and the consequences of climate change and the need to maintain Community standards and improved quality.

- Access to services

To guarantee a future for the young and the not-so-young who live in rural areas, it is essential to establish the necessary infrastructure and services, e.g. internet connection, to guarantee living standards that are equivalent to those in urban areas, and to overcome the issue of isolation, which is the main cause behind violence against rural women.

- Improvement of social security systems

Unfortunately, in some countries the status of assisting spouse is overlooked and both women and men working in farming ought to obtain social security coverage, be covered against accidents in the workplace, be able to access a pension plan, and also access subsidies granted to the farm.

Attributing a mandatory social status to all persons working in agriculture, be it in family farming or other, would be an initial step towards recognizing the work of women farmers and is an approach that is socially acceptable with respect to the work they carry out.

– Statistics/data

Develop information databases and networks in national level in order to register and raise awareness about the economic and social situation of women in rural areas.

Development of human capacity is essential to achieving broad-based economic growth, building strong, sustainable communities and promoting social well-being.

Systems of social protection enable societies to advance the well-being and security of their citizens by protecting them from vulnerability and deprivation so that they can pursue a decent life.

The relevance of poverty increased, social wellbeing and growth are also built on robust and high quality infrastructure that creates jobs and wealth.

The successful pursuit of development is essential to advance security objectives:

- creation of decent jobs, particularly for the youth and eradicate poverty
- creation of green jobs as generators of decent jobs
- enhanced infrastructure investment which promotes sustainable development
- promote sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Economy and environment have to advance together.

Sustained development outcomes depend on partnership with local institutions and communities in charge, supported with the tools they need to find solutions and transform their destinies.

The role of women in society has changed considerably, the agricultural sector has recognized women's contribution to farm labour, their managerial role on the farm and their ownership of holdings, and increasingly stresses the importance of their work outside of the farm too.

Many of today's challenges are international and global. Therefore, we need to set global goals to tackle them. The development is needed everywhere, we can't demand development and improvements only from the developing worlds nor from the richest countries, but all regions and countries are needed to improve their sustainability.

In family farms sustainability has always been appreciated value: we aim to leave the farm and soil to our children in better condition than we got it. "We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children," is known by everyone and especially clear for the family farmers.