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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
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including the right to development**

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food: integrating a gender perspective in the right to food

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat has the honour to transmit to the Human Rights Council the report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, prepared pursuant to Council resolution 22/9. In the report the Special Rapporteur explores the structural, cultural, legal, economic and ecological barriers that women face in their fulfilment of the right to food. She identifies examples of good practice, demonstrating how women's increased access to and control over assets has shown to have positive effects on household food security, child nutrition and the general well-being of women and families. The Special Rapporteur encourages States to focus on gender-sensitive policies in all fields, particularly in the context of climate change, in order to achieve further improvements in women's access to their right to food.

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I. Introduction

1. Since the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations in 1945, equality between men and women has been included among the most fundamental guarantees of human rights. The same principles of equality and non-discrimination are at the core of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (art. 2 (2)) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (art. 2 (1)). Both Covenants, each in its article 3, oblige States parties to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of the rights set forth in the respective Covenant.

2. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women sets out the State obligations to ensure gender equality and non-discrimination in the enjoyment of all human rights. In accordance with article 14 on rural women, States parties are to take measures to create an enabling environment for women to enjoy, among other things, equal treatment in land and agrarian reform and in land resettlement schemes. The Convention also sets out an obligation for States parties to ensure adequate nutrition for women during pregnancy and lactation (art. 12). The Convention provides good guidance for adopting an integrated approach in tackling violations of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that may be experienced by women in various social contexts. But it fails to incorporate guidance specifically addressing women's right to adequate food and nutrition.

3. Despite the legal framework designed to protect them, women experience poverty and hunger at disproportionate levels. Institutionalized gender discrimination and violence still impose barriers that prevent women from enjoying their economic, social and cultural rights and specifically the right to adequate food and nutrition. Also, the status of women and girls has not substantially improved, despite recurrent calls for the inclusion of a gender perspective in development programmes and social policies.

4. Women account for 70 per cent of the world's hungry and are disproportionately affected by malnutrition and food insecurity (see A/HRC/16/40, para. 29). The consequences of this gender-related poverty are overwhelming in some developing and least developed countries; for example, in several South Asian countries, more than one third of women are underweight.¹ Moreover, the number of women excluded from global society by poor nutrition, lack of health care and social protection, limited economic opportunities and general neglect exceeds the number of men killed in all wars of the twentieth-century.²

5. At the same time, women are responsible for cultivating more than 50 per cent of the world's food (see A/HRC/16/40, para. 29). In sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean, women produce up to 80 per cent of basic foodstuffs; in Asia women constitute 50 to 90 per cent of the labour force dedicated to rice production.³ Moreover, in many parts of the world the majority of women farmers are engaged primarily in subsistence farming.

6. Although women produce and provide food, they are often the last in line in terms of access to food to consume themselves. They tend to remain invisible in decision-making processes and are rarely considered as individual rights holders, but rather only as

¹ See, for example, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Nutrition country profiles: Bangladesh. Available from www.fao.org/ag/agn/nutrition/bgd_en.stm.

² Aileen A. Pisciotta, "Post-2015 development goals for gender equality and empowerment of women", *Southwestern Journal of International Law*, vol. 21 (2015), pp. 304-305.

³ See www.fao.org/docrep/x0262e/x0262e16.htm.

community members, mothers, farmers or caregivers. Gender gaps are observed in access to all productive resources, such as land, seeds, fertilizers, pest control measures, mechanical tools, credit and extension services. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), “inequalities between men and women in their access to productive resources, services and opportunities are one of the causes of underperformance in the agriculture sector, and contribute to deficiencies in food and nutrition security, economic growth and overall development”.⁴

7. Improving this situation for women would lead to important advantages for society as a whole. It is estimated that closing the gender gap in agricultural yields would increase agricultural output in developing countries by between 2.5 and 4 per cent. That, in turn, could reduce the number of undernourished people in the world by 12 to 17 per cent — a decrease amounting to as many as 150 million people.⁵

8. Considering the vital importance of women to the global food systems and to family budgets, the Special Rapporteur will first outline the persistent discrimination and structural barriers that women and girls face in several fields. Despite the recognition in international human rights law and policies of the vital role of women, the situation of women with regard to the implementation of right to food remains critical. In the present report, the Special Rapporteur will describe the cultural, legal, economic and ecological barriers that hinder the equal implementation of the right to food. She addresses the positive role that women can play in developing solutions to the challenges faced in regard to, inter alia, eliminating hunger, maintaining food security and preserving natural resources. The Special Rapporteur focuses in particular on the importance of gender-sensitive policies in the context of climate change, and the particular vulnerability of rural women.

II. Social, cultural and structural barriers

9. Women are disadvantaged on several social levels, largely owing to the influence of patriarchal systems. All societies practise some form of social structuring based on gender roles; such structuring has major ramifications in developing countries where resources are especially scarce. Social stratification affects women’s right to produce food by preventing them from gaining access to the inputs of production. This can occur either as a result of discriminatory legal barriers or the operation of market forces that put women in a disadvantaged position. Women are also affected by patriarchal structures that facilitate unequal treatment in the labour market. Even where women’s equal rights exist under the law, they often fail to supersede structural barriers.

10. Social segregation based on gender, when combined with other forms of discrimination based on religion, race, ethnicity, class and caste, disadvantages women even further. For example, indigenous women living in rural areas are more likely to be particularly disadvantaged in terms of the fulfilment of their rights, a trend seen in sub-Saharan Africa, where indigenous women lack access to the same level of rights to land, health and education that non-indigenous women enjoy.⁶

⁴ FAO, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women: A Tool for Gender-sensitive Agriculture and Rural Development Policy and Programme Formulation* (2013), p. 1. Available from www.fao.org/docrep/017/i3153e/i3153e.pdf.

⁵ FAO, *The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-11: Women in Agriculture — Closing the Gender Gap for Development* (Rome, 2011), p. vi.

⁶ See, for example, Action Communautaire pour la Promotion des Défavorisés Batwa and others, alternative report to the periodic report submitted by the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2013). Available from

11. Girls and women suffer from discrimination in relation to their right to food at all stages in life. In many countries, women receive less food than their male partners, owing to women's lower social status. In extreme cases, a preference for male children may lead to female infanticide, including by deprivation of food (see E/CN.4/2002/83, para. 74). Some mothers stop breastfeeding girls prematurely to try to become pregnant again in hopes of a son; that can lead to increased risks, including infection, where formula is mixed with impure water. Older women also face discrimination. In many parts of the world they tend to be less literate than older men; low literacy limits women's employability and their participation and ability to have a voice in community development activities and makes them less likely to be able to provide for themselves.

12. Structural violence is an underexamined barrier to women's right to adequate food and nutrition. Gender-based violence, which is a primary form of discrimination, prevents women from exercising their right to adequate food and nutrition for themselves, and impedes efforts to overcome hunger and malnutrition.⁷ Some men control women's behaviour and monitor women's food work in households. A woman's perceived failure to adequately prepare food and meals is a common justification for "disciplinary" action.

13. Furthermore, girls and adolescent women induced by tradition, or forced into, child marriage and adolescent pregnancy suffer the consequences of a high work burden and deprivation of their rights as children, including their right to adequate nutrition and education. They are required to perform heavy amounts of domestic work and are responsible for raising children while still children themselves.⁸ Adolescent pregnancy is a typical outcome of child marriage; complications during pregnancy and childbirth are the second leading cause of death for girls aged 15 to 19 globally.⁹

III. Legal barriers

14. The failure to ensure women's access to adequate food can arguably be linked to two structural disconnects that exist at the crossroads between women's rights and the right to food.¹⁰ The first disconnect is the failure in international law to fully endow women with the right to food. In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the right to food is accorded to everyone as part of the right to an adequate standard of living for "himself and his family". Although the non-discriminatory intention of the right to food has been underscored in Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights general comment No. 12 (1999) and other documents, the archaic language of patriarchy taints the Declaration and treaty language. Many economic and social rights included in the Covenant are reiterated in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, but the right to food is not. That right is touched upon indirectly, only through provisions on rural women. In that Convention, as in the Convention on the Rights of Child, food access and

http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/JointNGOsubmission_DRCForTheSession55_en.pdf.

⁷ Anne C. Bellows and Anna Jenderedjian, "Violence and women's participation in the right to adequate food and nutrition", in Anne C. Bellows and others, *Gender, Nutrition, and the Human Right to Adequate Food: Towards an Inclusive Framework* (forthcoming, Routledge, New York, 2016), p. 108.

⁸ United Nations Children's Fund, *Early Marriage: A Harmful Traditional Practice* (2005). Available from www.unicef.org/publications/files/Early_Marriage_12.lo.pdf.

⁹ World Health Organization, Adolescent Pregnancy, fact sheet No. 364 (2014). Available from www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs364/en/.

¹⁰ Bellows and others, *Gender, Nutrition, and the Human Right to Adequate Food*.

adequacy for adult women and teenage girls are addressed only on behalf of pregnant and breastfeeding women.¹¹

15. The second disconnect concerns the structural separation of nutrition from the human right to adequate food, the result of which has been a focus on increased food production rather than broad and equal food access. In United Nations treaty law, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Child, nutrition is not developed as constitutive of a right to food for all women, but rather for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, reflecting a focus on women in their reproductive role.¹²

16. Women also face numerous legal barriers in domestic law that prevent them from fully realizing their right to food, including in respect of property, land and intellectual property rights. Such legal barriers also prevent women from maintaining livelihoods that provide the sustainable incomes necessary to purchase food, thus challenging their ability to achieve food security.

17. Rather than enabling women to secure stable livelihoods, formal and customary laws often create barriers to women's economic independence. As noted by FAO, "credit markets are not gender-neutral", and women may find themselves prohibited from entering into contracts, opening bank accounts or entering into loan agreements.¹³

18. Legal barriers also prevent men and women from benefiting equally from paid employment in the form of systems of overt discrimination against women in the workplace. In 2014, 77 of 140 countries that had reported data to the World Bank still had legal restrictions on the type of paid employment activities available to women.¹⁴ Even when equal employment opportunities are available, equal pay is not: only 59 countries from the same sample of countries legally require equal pay for work of equal value.¹⁵

19. Finally, legal barriers may force women to choose between domestic responsibilities and outside employment. As primary caretakers for children and households, women are not always permitted to engage in paid employment, and family and personal laws may prevent a woman from making employment decisions without her husband's permission. Meanwhile, some countries have highly discriminatory family laws that give husbands authority over their wives in marriage, including rights over property and divorce filings. Women, as those carrying the primary responsibility for domestic work, also often struggle with inadequate maternity protection and childcare.

A. Property rights

1. Land rights

20. One of the most significant factors enabling women to thrive as producers of food, either for income support or subsistence, is the ability to own and access land. Unfortunately, the exclusion of women from land ownership is a global phenomenon. The share of landholdings owned by women in Africa ranges from less than 5 per cent to 30 per

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., pp. 58-108.

¹³ FAO, *The State of Food and Agriculture*, p. 33.

¹⁴ World Bank data, cited in United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), *Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights* (2015).

¹⁵ Ibid.

cent.¹⁶ In a recent study on the situation of women and their right to land in Central America, researchers found in all countries laws that recognized the equality of rights between men and women. Yet a profound gap remains between formal equality and equality in practice. As a result of this gap, women own less land, the land they own tends to be of worse quality, smaller and they enjoy less judicial security with respect to their land. In Central America, the proportion of land managed or owned by women ranges between just 12 and 23 per cent.¹⁷

21. Indications of discriminatory land distribution have also been observed elsewhere. For example, in the Philippines, while the State legally allows women to own land, the invisibility of women within the food production system has created structural barriers that prevent them from accessing productive resources. There is a correlation between land ownership and access to productive resources, including credit, inputs, varieties of seeds and inorganic fertilizers, farming equipment and extension services, including credit. As a result, less than 3 per cent of women who work in the agriculture and fisheries sectors in the Philippines benefit from support services such as credit, provision of seeds, training and access to technology, therefore making it almost impossible for them to secure a sustainable income and livelihood.

22. Women's ownership of property is a significant indicator in measuring poverty, and a key factor in securing the increased participation of women in household decision-making. Granting women the autonomy to make everyday choices has been proven to improve reproductive health, family nutrition and child welfare. Land ownership also helps strengthen women's roles in community affairs and women's bargaining power.¹⁸

2. Inheritance

23. Inheritance is often the main avenue for land acquisition by women, yet women are still less likely than men to inherit land. Inheritance is often determined through marriage practices. Through patrilineality, which is the most common societal system, sons, rather than daughters, inherit land from their fathers. Even where bilateral inheritance practices exist, communities may favour customary patrilineal practices. For example, in the Mossi community in Burkina Faso, although the majority of families are Muslim and, in theory, daughters inherit land, that inheritance practice is not always observed.¹⁹

24. For married women, the death of a husband does not guarantee her ownership rights of the decedent's property. In Uganda, for example, a co-ownership clause was added to the Land Act of 1998, which technically vested the land title in both the husband and wife; however, upon the death of the husband, any children of the marriage are legally allowed to take land from the mother and the mother rarely has access to the knowledge or legal resources necessary to assert her ownership rights.²⁰ Similarly, among the Hmong and Khmu, the largest ethnic minority groups in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, women

¹⁶ Marcela Villarreal, "Decreasing gender inequality in agriculture: key to eradicating hunger", *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, vol. 20, No. 1 (2013).

¹⁷ Red Centroamericana de Mujeres Rurales Indígenas y Campesinas, "Tierra para nosotras. Propuestas políticas de las mujeres rurales centroamericanas para el acceso a la tierra" (2015).

¹⁸ ActionAid International, "Securing women's right to land and livelihoods: a key to ending hunger and fighting AIDS", ActionAid International Briefing Paper (June 2008).

¹⁹ World Bank, FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), *Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook* (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2009), p. 129.

²⁰ Aili Mari Tripp, "Women's movements, customary law, and land rights in Africa: the case of Uganda", *African Studies Quarterly*, vol. 7, No. 4.

are primarily considered as guardians of their children's inheritance rather than heirs in their own right and single women are prohibited from living independently.²¹

3. Property ownership within marriage

25. In the case of land purchased during a marriage, women may lack equitable ownership. Societies with customary law often exclude joint ownership on the basis of the belief that women are not capable of owning land. In market economies, when societal norms have recognized community property between spouses, joint ownership of property acquired during marriage is commonly accepted but, as a result of patriarchal norms, recognition of gender-equal property rights can still be elusive.

4. State action

26. Between 1990 and 2010, many Latin American and sub-Saharan African countries engaged in land reform to establish formal laws that recognize and protect women's rights to land. According to World Bank data, by 2014, 128 countries had laws that guaranteed married women's equality regarding property, and in 112 countries the inheritance rights of daughters were equal to those of sons.²²

27. These are positive developments but, unfortunately, formal laws have not sufficiently secured the property rights of women, largely owing to the prevalence of customary laws. In many African countries the existence of dual legal systems reflecting both customary laws and common law tends to complicate land ownership.²³ In Asia, many countries retain personal or religious law that prevails over formal laws in practice, which effectively prevents women from owning land. In many cases, formal laws and State institutions have limited reach beyond urban centres.

28. Formal laws could also prove ineffective if women do not realize or assume control over their rights. For example, in 2005, India amended the Hindu Succession Act of 1956 to allow men and women equal inheritance of agricultural land. However, according to a 2013 study, challenges in the implementation of the Act have been observed, allegedly as a result of women not being aware of their legal rights or not wanting to upset their families, and resistance from brothers, among other reasons.²⁴

29. State action can also be a source of discriminatory land distribution. A State may engage in land redistribution through various measures, including land reform, large-scale appropriation and privatization programmes. At times, land distribution intended to benefit marginalized groups only benefits male heads of household. Recent land reform programmes have tried to address this inequity by specifically allocating land to women or acknowledging joint property rights.²⁵ However, many countries still come up short, even when gender equality is explicitly articulated as a policy objective in such programmes.

²¹ Elizabeth Mann and Ny Luangkhot, "Study on women's land and property rights under customary or traditional tenure systems in five ethnic groups in Lao PDR", Land Policy Study No. 13 (2008), pp. 14, 24 and 47.

²² Out of 139 and 138 countries with available data, respectively. UN-Women, *Progress of the World's Women*.

²³ Nia K.N. Jackson, "All players to the table: getting total buy-in to an economic approach to women's land rights reform", *Journal of International Business and Law*, vol. 10, No. 1 (2011), pp. 196-199.

²⁴ Ashok K. Sircar and Sohini Pal, "What is preventing women from inheriting land? A study of the implementation of the Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act 2005 in three states in India", paper prepared for presentation at the 2014 World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty, held in Washington D.C., 24-27 March 2014.

²⁵ World Bank, FAO and IFAD, *Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook*, pp. 137-138.

This has also been true of the responses of States to large-scale resettlements resulting from development projects and large land acquisitions.

B. Intellectual property rights

30. Historically, efforts to increase the global food supply did not apply the intellectual property rights regime to agricultural innovation. In most communities, farming practices such as seed exchanges were communal activities, unrestricted by law. Furthermore, most agricultural research and development was funded by the public sector. Today, however, industrialized agriculture has largely replaced traditional agriculture; driven by the competitive market, the demand for agricultural innovations to increase production has increased. Over the past few decades, funding for agricultural research and development has shifted to private companies. The 10 largest agricultural biotechnology companies invest roughly 1.69 billion euros per year — about 7.5 per cent of their total sales revenue — in new product development.²⁶ To ensure that those companies recoup their development costs and continue to invest in research and development, an intellectual property rights framework for agricultural technologies has emerged.

31. Unfortunately, the intellectual property rights regime disproportionately excludes women, particularly in the context of agriculture. For example, the regime tends to reward high technology but ignore the contributions that the female labour force makes to agricultural production.²⁷ Meanwhile, the privatization of agricultural resources leads to increased monetization. Women are less likely than men to have discretionary income and are therefore less able to afford expensive seeds that were once managed communally.²⁸

32. Furthermore, the intellectual property rights regime does not readily acknowledge the value of women's traditional knowledge, which may cover a broad range of agricultural practices, technologies and techniques. In addition, women are faced with the threat of biopiracy: the practice of co-opting and patenting traditional knowledge, without awarding appropriate compensation.

Seed saving and the elimination of women's role in food security

33. The greatest implication of the intellectual property rights regime with regard to women and their right to food relates to seed saving, a practice that is predominantly controlled by women and is a critical component of small-scale, subsistence agriculture. Studies show that up to 90 per cent of planting materials used in smallholder agriculture are seeds and germ plasms that are produced, selected and saved by women.²⁹ Seeds and seed banks are important for addressing the crisis of agricultural biodiversity, for ensuring sustainable livelihood solutions for food security, and for empowering women with a sustainable livelihood.³⁰ Globally, women have bred more than 7,000 species of crops.³¹ In

²⁶ Catherine Jewell, "Who benefits from IP rights in agricultural innovation?", *WIPO Magazine* (August 2015). Available from www.wipo.int/wipo_magazine/en/2015/04/article_0003.html.

²⁷ Kausiki Mukhopadhyay, "The negative impact of TRIPS on gender rights in access to health and food in India: a study of the dynamics of knowledge economy and neo-medieval governance", dissertation, University of Denver (2014), p. 48.

²⁸ UNDP, "Intellectual property, agrobiodiversity and gender considerations: issues and case studies from the Andean and South Asian regions", policy paper (2010).

²⁹ Vandana Shiva and Kunwar Jalees, "Impact of WTO on women in agriculture" (New Delhi, National Commission for Women, 2005).

³⁰ Farida Akhter, "Reflections on empowerment", in *Seeds of Movements: On Women's Issues in Bangladesh*, Farida Akhter, ed. (Dhaka, Naringrantha Prabantana, 2007).

India alone, seed saving has enabled women to breed 200,000 varieties of rice.³² Biodiversity offers the genetic variation necessary to protect against diseases, pests and weather events that threaten to wipe out food supplies.

34. Meanwhile, global agribusiness and biotechnology corporations have transformed the global commercial seed market into a multi-billion dollar industry;³³ three companies control over 50 per cent of that market.³⁴ With such lucrative monopolies at stake, those international corporations have actively exercised the intellectual property rights regime to secure exclusive access to, and thus royalties from, patented seeds. As a result of intellectual property rights laws, seeds that would have once been saved and shared are now the intellectual property of corporations. Recent litigation demonstrates that corporations are willing to appeal to the law to protect their property. Monsanto reports that, since 1997, it has filed 147 lawsuits against farmers who failed to honor the “agreement”, i.e. Monsanto’s intellectual property rights.³⁵

35. The fact that 73 per cent of the world’s seed supply is owned and patented by these corporations and are therefore non-renewable³⁶ presents women and poor farmers with a major dilemma. They have to choose between discontinuing their traditional practice of saving and exchanging seeds or risking punishment for an intellectual property crime.

IV. Economic barriers

A. Changing global economic policy and the rise of corporate models of agriculture

36. Non-corporate agricultural producers, and particularly women, have suffered from the evolution in agricultural policy and economic trends over the past several decades. The devastating structural adjustment policies imposed throughout much of the developing world, largely as a precondition for receiving development assistance or joining the global trade regime, have resulted in an overall loss in agricultural productivity, decreased yields and increasingly precarious rural livelihoods.³⁷

37. Women food producers have been particularly disadvantaged by these policies and there is limited recourse, since the Agreement on Agriculture requires member States to refrain from introducing new forms of domestic support for agricultural production,³⁸ most of which are designed to help support small-scale and subsistence women farmers.

38. Agricultural trade liberalization is generally premised on export-promotion policies that benefit men and larger-scale farmers. Liberalization has also opened smaller markets to

³¹ Vandana Shiva, “Day 3: seeds in women’s hands”, blog post, 21 November 2012, available from <https://blogs.oxfam.org/en/blogs/seeds-in-womens-hands>.

³² Ibid.

³³ ETC Group, “Putting the cartel before the horse ... and farm, seeds, soil, peasants etc.: who will control the agricultural inputs?”, communiqué No. 111 (2013), p. 7.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

³⁵ Monsanto, “Why does Monsanto sue farmers who save seeds?” Available from www.monsanto.com/newsviews/pages/why-does-monsanto-sue-farmers-who-save-seeds.aspx.

³⁶ Shiva, “Day 3”.

³⁷ UN-Women, *Progress of the World’s Women*, pp. 109-110; UN-Women, *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development 2014: Gender Equality and Sustainable Development* (2014), p. 67.

³⁸ Smita Narula, “Reclaiming the right to food as a normative response to the global food crisis”, *Yale Human Rights and Development Journal*, vol. 13, No. 2 (2010), p. 409.

subsidized imports, thus displacing the farm products of local women and encouraging the production of export crops over subsistence agriculture. Women are struggling to maintain household incomes because of increased competition with imported agricultural goods, reduced prices and declining commodity prices in international markets.

39. The trade liberalization policies heavily favour large corporate agribusinesses and a large-scale model of agricultural production, at the expense of the most vulnerable and marginalized small-scale agricultural producers. Women tend to engage in agricultural production on a scale that is not compatible with a large corporate model of farming, holding plots that are smaller than those of men and that are, on average, 20-30 per cent less productive than those managed by men.³⁹

40. Agro-biotechnology is also a large part of the corporate model of agriculture, and it poses specific challenges for women. Women generally lack necessary training in technology and experience time poverty that prevents them from accessing relevant education. As a result, women are less likely to understand technological developments and the effective and safe use of technology. Also, women's participation in the development of agro-biotechnology is limited, so such technologies often fail to account for women's needs.⁴⁰

B. Extra burdens on women farmworkers

41. Most of the world's rural poor are employed in the agriculture sector. Globally, 20 to 30 per cent of the 450 million waged agricultural workers are women, as are 30 per cent of those employed in the fishing sector, and this number is increasing.⁴¹ Yet women face difficulties in engaging in market activities when cultural norms make it socially unacceptable for them to interact with men.

42. Even without formal prohibitions on market access, structural barriers may challenge women's ability to produce in sufficient volumes, establish relationships with buyers or market their goods. Women may also not have sufficient time to engage in market activities as a result of their unpaid work burden. As a result, women are particularly disadvantaged by "free" markets. Women farmworkers are often excluded from the benefits of the contract farming arrangements central to the agro-industrial model of contemporary agriculture. Men largely control the contract arrangements while women perform much of the waged agricultural labour.⁴²

43. Moreover, agriculture is one of the most dangerous sectors in which to work, particularly for women. It is physically demanding and safety standards are often low or non-existent, and protective equipment and clothing are often designed with men in mind. Women are also most often engaged on a piecework basis, which motivates them to put their health at risk to complete as much work as possible.⁴³ In 2014, allegations of serious breaches of this kind were received by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Guatemala, referring to the widespread practice of tying wages to productivity goals

³⁹ Villarreal, "Decreasing gender inequality", p. 5.

⁴⁰ See note by the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development on inclusive and gender-sensitive development paths (TD/456), para. 19.

⁴¹ Transnational Institute (TNI), Foodfirst Information and Action Network (FIAN), Instytut Globalnej Odpowiedzialności (IGO) and Forschungs und Dokumentationszentrum Chile-Lateinamerika (FDCL), "Women agricultural workers and the right to adequate food and nutrition" (Heidelberg, Germany, FIAN, 2014), p. 6.

⁴² FAO, *The State of Food and Agriculture*, p. 13.

⁴³ TNI, FIAN, IGO and FDCL, "Women agricultural workers", p. 9.

(see A/HRC/28/3/Add.1 and Corr.1, paras. 69-70), which in turn affected women proportionally more, as they were often forced to work in an unrecognized manner, helping the men reach those goals. Women agricultural workers also face rights violations related to their reproductive roles. Exposure to certain chemicals used in agriculture can cause spontaneous abortions and premature births and affect child and infant development through exposure to toxic chemicals in utero and also by way of breast milk.⁴⁴ As a result of discriminatory hiring practices, women often hide their pregnancies and employers often hire women on short-term contracts in order to avoid paying maternity benefits.⁴⁵

44. Often, discrimination against women agricultural workers is partly due to their absence from supervisory structures and unions. Women involved in unions can face retaliation from their employers. Migrant women workers with precarious immigration status are particularly vulnerable and may prefer not to engage in activities potentially challenging employer authority, including joining unions and reporting sexual abuse.⁴⁶

45. The food security of women in farming households and landless labourers is dependent on the adequacy of their wages.⁴⁷ Rural labour markets are highly gender-segregated and women are more likely to work in low-wage sectors, with inadequate social protection, in temporary, seasonal and casual work and in activities that require relatively unskilled labour.

46. Many food producers and agricultural labourers are unable to feed their families, since commercial farmers “relentlessly” try to save on labour costs through the casualization of the labour force.⁴⁸ State support intended to ameliorate this problem is also lacking.

47. Similarly, although women contribute significantly to the work carried out at the different stages within the fishing industry, the role they play is largely undervalued. Despite their direct contribution to the fishing economy, women in the industry are categorically excluded from State-sponsored benefits, facilities and services.

48. However, the broad category of female-headed households should be differentiated further, as households face different socioeconomic circumstances, resulting in different outcomes regarding their livelihoods and food and nutrition security. Research among South African farmworkers revealed that some female-headed households, despite having less access to earned income, achieved greater food and nutrition security than comparable male-headed households. This was due to women having better access to social grants, remittances and income obtained through informal work. This highlights the crucial role of women’s access to resources and power relations within households for greater food and nutrition security.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers’ Associations, *A Gender Equality Guide for Trade Unionists in the Agriculture, Food, Hotel and Catering Sectors: All for One = One for All* (2007), p. 14. Available from www.inclusivocities.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Mather_IUF_All_for_One.pdf.

⁴⁵ Sue Longley, “Decent work for rural women workers — essential for ensuring their right to food”, in Right to Food and Nutrition Watch, *Alternatives and Resistance to Policies that Generate Hunger* (2013), p. 38.

⁴⁶ Human Rights Watch, *Cultivating Fear: The Vulnerability of Immigrant Farmworkers in the US to Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment* (2012).

⁴⁷ Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1982).

⁴⁸ UN-Women, *World Survey*, p. 60.

⁴⁹ Stephanie Lemke and Anne C. Bellows, “Sustainable food systems, gender, and participation: foregrounding women in the context of the right to adequate food and nutrition”, in Bellows and others, *Gender, Nutrition, and the Human Right to Adequate Food*. See also Stephanie Lemke, Anne

C. Women's non-agricultural livelihoods and the right to food

49. Disadvantages for women in both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors undermine their right to food. Women's income possibilities are more constrained than men's; the women's participation in the labour force is lower than men on a global scale in developing countries, only 40 per cent of working age women are participating in the labour force, compared to 70 per cent of working age men,⁵⁰ and labour force participation rates have stagnated around the world in the past two decades.⁵¹

50. Women earn an average of 24 per cent less than men, resulting in a lifetime reduction in income of between 31 and 75 per cent, and they are also less likely to receive a pension.⁵² International Labour Organization data show that occupational segregation is significant, with women overrepresented in clerical and support positions and in service and sales roles compared to managerial occupations, skilled work in agriculture and fisheries and craft and trade occupations.⁵³ Unfortunately, new economic development does not reduce such segregation. Occupational segregation results in a lower quality of work accessible to women, as well as a stubbornly persistent wage gap outside of the agricultural sector, which affects women's income and their ability to purchase food.⁵⁴

51. When women earn income to support their families, men often respond by withdrawing their contribution to the household budget in order to purchase luxuries.⁵⁵ A recent study in Nicaragua showed that if mothers contributed considerably to household income the likelihood of moderate and severe food insecurity decreased by 34 per cent; if mothers were the main decision-makers with regard to household income, the likelihood of such food insecurity decreased by 60 per cent.⁵⁶

52. In the absence of additional support for care work at home, those who depend on women, namely, children and the elderly, may be further disadvantaged by women working outside the home to earn an income. Daughters, for example, may drop out of school to fill the care gap. Clearly, this speaks to the discrimination against women in labour market participation, if care work remains the main or sole responsibility of women.

V. Ecological barriers: climate change

53. Climate change is one of the foremost contemporary threats to food security. The agriculture sector is under substantial stress from climate change-induced increases in temperature, variability in rainfall and extreme weather events that trigger crop failures, pest and disease outbreaks and the degradation of land and water resources (A/70/287).

54. It is widely acknowledged that climate change impacts are not gender neutral. As already marginalized individuals in virtually every society, women face discrimination and

C. Bellows and Nicole Heumann, "Gender and sustainable livelihoods: case study of South African farm workers", *International Journal of Innovation and Sustainable Development*, vol. 4, No. 2-3 (2009), pp. 195-205.

⁵⁰ FAO, *The State of Food and Agriculture*.

⁵¹ UN-Women, *Progress of the World's Women*, p. 71.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁵⁴ World Bank, *World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development* (Washington, D.C., 2011), p. 205.

⁵⁵ World Bank, FAO and IFAD, *Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook*, p. 90.

⁵⁶ Kammi K. Schmeer and others, "Maternal resources and household food security: evidence from Nicaragua", *Public Health Nutrition*, vol. 18, No. 16 (November 2015).

are subject to human rights abuses at a disproportionate rate, which are further exacerbated by climate change.

55. Women have multiple responsibilities as heads of households, caregivers and subsistence farmers, and balancing these roles is increasingly challenging in the face of climate change. Women also participate in a wide range of activities that support sustainable agricultural development, such as soil and water conservation, agroecology, afforestation and crop domestication and are vital to adaptation and mitigation policies.

56. The successful implementation of climate change policies and projects requires an understanding of gender-based roles and relationships vis-à-vis natural resources and of the gender-differentiated impacts of climate change. The Beijing Declaration, in 1995, was the first international declaration to recognize the links between gender equality and climate change. It took a long time for international climate change policymakers to address those gender dimensions. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change regime referred to gender considerations only in the reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation mechanism and response measures, with the latter referring to women as a “vulnerable group”. In recent years, progress has been made in integrating gender equality in the decisions taken at sessions of the Conference of the Parties. It remains uncertain how the incorporation of a gender perspective into climate change policies will be acknowledged in the climate change agreement emerging from the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties.

57. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges the critical importance of advancing gender equality and empowering women and girls to realize sustainable development. Many of the climate-related Sustainable Development Goals emphasize gender-specific targets, including those related to ownership and control over land and access to new technology (Goal 1), small-scale food producers (Goal 2) and water and sanitation (Goal 6). These goals provide a mandate for advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment across all areas of climate change action.

58. However, the Sustainable Development Goals still need to incorporate a human rights approach, including meaningful participation and monitoring systems to evaluate standards, as well as mechanisms to seek remedy for violations of human rights, particularly for women. A human rights approach provides local self-determination and promotes local control over critical resources such as water and land and protects biodiversity, which helps women access such vital resources.

A. Why women matter in climate change policies

1. Disaster management

59. One area of concern is disaster management, because climate change is likely to affect the number and severity of extreme weather events. Research shows that in societies where men and women should be impacted indiscriminately, women and girls are up to 14 times more likely to die in the event of a disaster, as a result of gender-based inequalities.⁵⁷ This is especially true for elderly women, women with disabilities, pregnant and nursing

⁵⁷ Lorena Aguilar, “Is there a connection between gender and climate change?” (International Union for Conservation of Nature), available from www.capwip.org/Phillipinas%20presentacion%20-%20Lorena%20Aguilar.pdf, and United Nations Population Fund – Zimbabwe, “When disaster strikes, women and girls are the backbone of resilience” (2015), available from http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/zimbabwe/2015/07/11/12467/when_disaster_strikes_women_and_girls_are_the_backbone_of_resilience.

women and women with small children, who may lack or have limited mobility and resources, and therefore remain most at risk in cases of emergency.⁵⁸

60. Women remain more vulnerable than men in post-disaster situations, as their household responsibilities increase while access to resources decreases. The daily work involved in providing food, water and fuel for households after a disaster requires intensive labour, the bulk of which is borne by women. Moreover, marketing interference with breastfeeding initiation and long-term prolongation jeopardizes women's ability to safely feed their infants and young children, given the unreliable quality and quantity of safe drinking water, particularly in post-disaster situations.

61. Climate change itself intensifies the psychological stress associated with disasters, increasing women's risks of situations of violence, sexual harassment and trafficking. Some women are forced into prostitution, and research has shown increased HIV prevalence in drought-ridden areas of rural Africa.⁵⁹

62. In post-disaster areas, women assume leadership roles in food distribution during emergencies, yet emergency decision-making processes after disasters often exclude women. The limited nature of the participation of women restricts their engagement in political decisions that affect their specific needs and vulnerabilities, and relief workers often view women as victims rather than as potential agents of change, thus reinforcing gender inequalities.

2. Women's livelihoods and household responsibilities

63. In many rural areas, women and girls spend the majority of their time engaged in subsistence farming and in the collection of water and fuel. In cases of flooding, drought, fire and mudslides, these tasks become more difficult. Water shortages and the depletion of forests require women and girls to walk longer distances to collect water and wood. In Mozambique and Senegal, women spend 15.3 and 17.5 hours, respectively, each week collecting water. In Nepal, girls spend an average of five hours per week on this task. In rural Africa and India, 30 per cent of women's daily energy intake is spent in carrying water. The depletion of land and water resources may place additional burdens on women's labour and health as they struggle to make their livelihoods in a changing environment.⁶⁰

64. The impact of environmental degradation and biodiversity loss on common property resources threatens household food security and livelihoods. Women who lack land tenure depend on common resources for subsistence. This dependency decreases the time available for food production and preparation and threatens women's safety, with consequences for household food security and nutritional well-being.

65. The impacts of decreased water quality as a result of climate change are also gender differentiated. Children and pregnant women are more physically vulnerable to waterborne diseases and their role in supplying household water and performing domestic chores makes them more vulnerable to developing diseases, such as diarrhoea and cholera, that thrive in degraded water. Decreased water resources may cause women's health to suffer as a result of the increased work burden and reduced nutritional status. For instance, in Peru

⁵⁸ High-level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, "Climate change and food security", June 2012.

⁵⁹ Marshall Burke, Erick Gong and Kelly Jones, "Income shocks and HIV in Africa", *The Economic Journal*, vol. 125, No. 585 (June 2015), pp. 1157-1189.

⁶⁰ World Bank, FAO and IFAD, *Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook*, pp. 455-456.

following the 1997-98 El Niño events, malnutrition among women was a major cause of peripartum illness.⁶¹

3. Challenges to women farmers

66. Insecure land tenure reduces the incentives for rural women and men to make long-term investments in soil rehabilitation and conservation, which are crucial to agricultural land management in an era of climate change and resource scarcity. Reductions in agricultural productivity and more competition for productive land leave women with the more marginal and fragile lands. Tools are often reserved for men's plots of land and women might not use technological adaptation techniques.⁶² In one sub-Saharan country, women have limited access to irrigation or other farm technology, such as motorized tillers, that would increase productivity and offset the negative impacts of climatic shocks.⁶³

67. Crop failure caused by slow-onset disasters, such as land degradation and drought, has resulted in an increase in men's out-migration in the developing world. Women are often left behind to struggle to feed their families and to take on men's traditional roles and responsibilities. This increases women's work, but does not grant women equal access to financial, technological and social resources to lessen the burden.

4. Mitigation strategies

68. A gendered approach to climate change adaptation and mitigation is necessary to combat the vulnerabilities women face because of existing social, economic and political inequalities. Mitigation activities aim to decrease greenhouse gas emissions through support for technology development and capacity-building. These activities also provide important opportunities for improving women's health and livelihoods by creating new opportunities for women, particularly in the renewable energy sector.⁶⁴ Development programmes that support the distribution of clean cook-stoves have had a significant impact on reducing emissions and limiting premature deaths and illness linked to indoor air pollution, particularly benefiting women and children.⁶⁵

69. Despite their role in collecting biofuel for household use, women are often excluded from energy plans and policies because energy is associated with electricity and fossil fuels and is therefore considered to be within the men's domain.

70. More needs to be done to improve opportunities for women to participate in the green economy, notably by ensuring that women benefit equally from employment

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 439.

⁶² See, for example, Ana María Romero González, Adama Belemvire and Saya Saulière, "Climate change and women farmers in Burkina Faso", Oxfam Research Reports (2011).

⁶³ Lori Beaman and Andrew Dillon, "The diffusion of agricultural technologies within social networks: evidence from composting in Mali". Available from http://womenandclimate.ifpri.info/files/2014/09/PN_2014_GCC_04_replaced_web.pdf.

⁶⁴ UNDP, *Powerful Synergies: Gender Equality, Economic Development and Environmental Sustainability* (2012). Available from www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/womens-empowerment/powerful-synergies.html.

⁶⁵ "Justice, human rights, and climate change: a conversation with Mary Robinson, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Climate Change", *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, vol. 39, No. 10 (2015), pp. 9-10.

opportunities arising from development projects focusing on clean technology and renewable energy.⁶⁶

5. Adaptation strategies

71. Adaptation strategies are adjustments made to ecological, social or economic systems in response to actual or expected effects or impacts of climate change. In general, adaptation policies and measures need to be gender sensitive, taking into account women's lack of control over and access to land, resources, transportation, information, technology and, ultimately, decision-making.⁶⁷ Data from several countries suggest that men and women have different needs, priorities and preferences regarding adaptation; indeed, men and women tend to report engaging in different adaptation strategies. Women tend to adopt certain practices more readily than men, for example, cover cropping with legumes to increase soil fertility and improve food security and improved feed management practices for livestock.⁶⁸

72. Oxfam researchers found that adaptation projects aimed at women created under the National Action Programme for Adaptation of Burkina Faso (NAPA) were aimed at diversifying the ways that women can generate income to offset income lost by harvests damaged by climate change.⁶⁹ In order to deal with the consequences of such climate change, individuals and organizations need to be better educated about the different vulnerabilities that men and women face in disasters, and local women's organizations need to be consulted in order to understand region-specific contexts. Moreover, such attempts could have ancillary positive effects, for example, developing credit systems to aid families during times of famine, strengthening women's organizations that promote adaptation measures and addressing larger issues in ways that could prevent gender inequality.⁷⁰

73. In all adaptation projects women should be granted access to the same level of technology and financing as is available to men. This will help women change agricultural practices and preserve livelihoods during times of drought. Addressing issues of resource management and land ownership will also improve women's resilience to climate change. Ultimately, communities must take a bottom-up approach in order to accurately understand local customs and to incorporate local knowledge; applying a model that relies upon solely opinions from international institutions or outside groups will not be as effective.

6. Agroecology

74. Agroecology is a reaction against the agricultural policies promoted by the Green Revolution that have replaced traditional farming with genetically modified seeds, extreme use of fertilization and intensive resource use (A/70/287). It offers an important means by which women farmers can adapt to climate change, recognizes women as legitimate actors and opens spaces for women to become more autonomous and empowered at the

⁶⁶ International Labour Organization, "Green jobs: improving the climate for gender equality too!" (2008). Available from www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@gender/documents/publication/wcms_101505.pdf.

⁶⁷ Ulrike Röhr, "Gender, climate change and adaptation: introduction to the gender dimensions", background paper prepared for the Both Ends Briefing Paper (2007). Available from www.unep.org/roa/amcen/Projects_Programme/climate_change/PreCop15/Proceedings/Gender-and-climate-change/Roehr_Gender_climate.pdf.

⁶⁸ Elizabeth Bryan, Patti Kristjanson and Claudia Ringler, "Why paying attention to gender matters for climate change adaptation" (2015), International Food Policy Research Institute Blog (2015).

⁶⁹ Romero Gonzalez, Belemvire and S. Saulière. (2011), "Climate change and women farmers in Burkina Faso". Oxfam Research Reports, (2011), www.oxfam.com/grow.

⁷⁰ UNDP, *Resource Guide on Gender and Climate Change* (2009).

productive, reproductive and community levels.⁷¹ At the same time, agroecology, as an alternative farming method, is proven to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

75. With the increased commercialization of agriculture and highly technological improvements, farming systems are overly dependent on external inputs, such as agrochemicals. Poor rural farmers, both women and men, often spread risk by growing a wide variety of locally adapted crops, some of which will be resistant to drought or pests, and raising livestock breeds that have adapted to the local agroecological zone. Diversification, an important coping strategy adopted by poor rural households, also protects women against climate change, desertification and other environmental stresses.⁷²

B. How to ensure gender-sensitive climate change policies

1. Effective participation in decision-making

76. In order for adaptation and mitigation strategies to take gender into account effectively, they must provide women with the opportunity to be active in the planning and implementation of such policies. Helping women participate fully in the process of adaptation will require concerted effort by decision makers to overcome the multiple barriers of lack of control over resources, lack of access to information and sociocultural constraints. Local adaptation policies need to be designed by both women and men in order to build upon existing knowledge and grant women access to the rights, resources and opportunities necessary to survive climate change in the years to come.

2. Integrating gender-disaggregated data and gender perspectives into research

77. Not enough agricultural research and development efforts have focused on options that meet women's specific needs and situations related to childcare, food preparation and the collection of domestic water and energy resources. New research based on gender-disaggregated data sheds light on gender differences in perceptions of climate change and the ability to adopt practices and technologies needed to increase resilience.⁷³ These data also show that men and women have different preferences, needs and priorities regarding the ways in which they respond to climate change. There is a need to better use gender-disaggregated data to inform evidence-based policymaking and integrate a gender perspective into research on climate change and mitigation and adaptation strategies.

3. Access to information and technology

78. Women often lack access to information about climate change; such knowledge is critical to support adaptation, promote well-being and increase resilience to climate change. Women are more likely than men to adopt climate-adaptive and resilient practices, but most women do not have access to formal sources of information, such as extension agents.

79. Researchers and breeders often work in isolation from farmers and are sometimes unaware of their needs and priorities beyond yield and resistance to pests and diseases.

⁷¹ Ana Paula Lopes and Emilia Jomalinis, "Agroecology: exploring opportunities for women's empowerment based on experiences from Brazil", *Feminist Perspectives towards Transforming Economic Power* series (Association for Women's Rights in Development, 2011). Available from www.observatoriodogenero.gov.br/menu/noticias/2fpttec-agroecology-eng1.pdf.

⁷² World Bank, FAO and IFAD, *Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook*, pp. 433-434.

⁷³ See, for example, Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security, International Food Policy Research Institute and International Livestock Research Institute, *Gender Household Survey 2013*, data available from <http://hdl.handle.net/1902.1/22584>.

Moreover, extension agents and research organizations tend to consider many local varieties and breeds to be low performing and inferior. As a result, national policies that provide incentives, such as loans and direct payments, for the use of modern varieties and breeds contribute to the loss of genetic diversity and affect traditional gender roles.⁷⁴

4. Gender-sensitive financial aid

80. Climate-related financial aid is not gender equal. Almost no climate aid goes to women, even though women experience a disproportionate amount of the impacts of climate change.⁷⁵ Accelerated efforts are needed to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed throughout all climate change programmes in all sectors, given the primary role that women play in natural resource management, farming, working, raising small livestock and collecting fuel and water. Overcoming these challenges will require stronger partnerships among research organizations, government agencies and non-governmental organizations to continue to strengthen the capacity of implementing organizations on gender and to build the evidence base on gender and climate change by monitoring and evaluating gender differences in participation in and outcomes of adaptation projects. A key challenge is the lack of gender experts in government programmes for climate change adaptation.⁷⁶

VI. Why gender analysis is necessary to address the right to food

81. Gender analysis is important for understanding the causes of hunger and malnutrition, owing to women's central role in food systems. The role of women in food production and household food management and the important consequences of gender relations for food security have been widely documented. Yet women cannot easily access productive assets, including land, water, seeds, machinery, livestock and credit and other financial services.⁷⁷ Women also face discrimination in attempts to access to food as an individual consumer.

82. The human rights perspective should accommodate a gender analysis for food security, and allow focus on women as individuals, rather than subsuming them into the focus on the nation, community or household. At the same time, gender analysis should include other social categories, such as age, social status, race, ethnicity and class. An adoption of the right-to-food approach together with gender-based analysis would better reveal discrimination against and inequality of women in food production cycles and at the household level. A person's ability to acquire nutritious food is closely related to other aspects of their capabilities and rights. For women and girls, discriminatory laws, social norms, values and practices further affect access to food and food security. Moreover, unequal power relations between genders penetrate both the private and public spheres and constrain the decision-making power of women and girls. That discrimination is reinforced when gender inequality is compounded with other forms of exclusion related to income, ethnicity or race.

⁷⁴ World Bank, FAO, IFAD, *Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook*, pp. 433-434.

⁷⁵ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Network on Gender Equality, "Making climate change finance work for women: overview of the integration of gender equality in aid to climate change" (2015). Available from www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/Making-Climate-Finance-Work-for-Women.pdf.

⁷⁶ Catherine Ragasa and others, "Organizational and institutional responses to climate change: insights from Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Kenya and Mali" (2014). Available from <http://ebrary.ifpri.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15738coll2/id/128771>.

⁷⁷ FAO, *The State of Food and Agriculture*.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations

83. Over the past few decades, women have broadened and deepened their involvement in agricultural production as they increasingly shoulder the responsibility for household survival and respond to economic opportunities in commercial agriculture. This phenomenon has drawn attention to the gender gap in agriculture, where women's productivity as farmers falls behind that of men, and where women remains less food secure, despite their dominant role in food production. This gender gap occurs because of cultural, legal and economic barriers; eliminating it requires a holistic understanding that responds to structural discrimination and to the failed implementation of attempted solutions. For instance, while international development has focused on providing technical training and access to new agricultural technologies for women, there has been a lack of focus on providing women with land rights and sufficient financial resources.⁷⁸ Moreover, women's responsibility in relation to household food security, namely, simply feeding their family and community, is totally excluded from such technical and economic solutions.

84. Closing the gender gap in agriculture requires the development of gender-sensitive policies. Ensuring land rights, reinforcing the rights of girls and women to education and social protection and increasing women's participation in decision-making in a meaningful manner are critical for enhancing the vital role of women in advancing agricultural development and food security. Increasing women's access to and control over assets has been shown to have positive effects on important human development outcomes, including household food security, child nutrition, education and women's well-being and status within the home and community. Moreover, providing women with essential tools and resources does not require a major investment of resources but can have a huge impact on the formal economy. Respecting, protecting and fulfilling women's rights will inevitably solve broader problems in food systems in general and can help communities achieve improved development outcomes.

85. The Special Rapporteur provides the following recommendations.

86. In order to address discrimination against women in terms of equal labour opportunities, States should:

(a) Recognize, reduce and redistribute women's unpaid care and domestic work, in order to create more opportunities for women to enter the labour market;

(b) Ensure investment in basic social protection, services and infrastructure, including health care and the provision of childcare services, which can allow women to participate in paid work;

(c) Develop comprehensive measures to tackle discrimination and violence against farmworkers and ensure implementation of those measures at the domestic level;

(d) Ensure a sound policy and enabling environment to address the gender gap in agriculture, including the provision of training for women, and ensure that their specific needs and preferences are taken into account;

⁷⁸ Anna Applefield and Jiwon Jun, "Working with women: an essential component of global food security and agricultural development", *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, vol. 38, No. 2 (2014), p. 186.

- (e) **Ensure that women in the fishing industry and women livestock owners have equal access to State-sponsored benefits, facilities and services;**
 - (f) **Ensure gender mainstreaming in all adaptation and mitigation responses to climate change and encourage policymakers to work with both women and men, taking their views into consideration at all levels;**
 - (g) **Provide increased access to information for women in relation to climate change, in order for them to support adaptation, promote well-being and increase resilience to climate change;**
 - (h) **Promote accelerated efforts in terms of financial aid, in order to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed throughout all climate change programmes in all sectors.**
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