



Report of the Expert Group Meeting

UN-Women
in cooperation with
FAO, IFAD and WFP

Accra, Ghana
20-23 September 2011

* The views expressed in this document are those of the experts and do not necessarily represent the views of the United Nations

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Introduction

1. In accordance with its multi-year programme of work for 2010-2014, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will consider “the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges” as its priority theme during its fifty-sixth session, from 27 February to 9 March 2012. In order to contribute to a deeper understanding of the issue and to assist the Commission in its deliberations, UN-Women in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the World Food Program (WFP) convened an expert group meeting (EGM) on “Enabling rural women’s economic empowerment: institutions, opportunities, and participation” from 20 to 23 September 2011 in Accra, Ghana.
2. This report presents the findings of the EGM and is based on the papers presented at the meeting and the ensuing discussions. Recommendations adopted by the meeting are included in the report. Individual expert and resource papers and presentations are available on the EGM website (see below).
3. This report will provide inputs for the reports of the Secretary-General to the CSW and will be widely disseminated in preparation to the fifty-sixth session of CSW.

I. Organization of work

4. The EGM brought together a diverse group of people from different backgrounds and regions including from academia, women’s, indigenous and farmers’ organizations and staff members of the United Nations system (see Annex I).
5. This report and all documentation relating to the meeting (see Annexes II and III) are available online at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw56/egm.htm>
6. The experts elected the following officers:
 - Chair: Eva Rathgeber
 - Vice-chairs: Malika Martini, Esther Penunia
 - Co-rapporteurs: Christine Okali, Nitya Rao

II. Global policy and legislative framework

7. International human rights treaties and intergovernmental outcomes have brought awareness and attention to the issues of rural women. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is the only international

human rights treaty with a specific article dedicated to the situation of rural women. It calls on States Parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against rural women in a number of areas. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women regularly addresses the issue of women living in rural areas in its concluding observations. A number of ILO Conventions cover agricultural and rural workers' rights and entitlements.¹

8. The General Assembly has recognized the crucial role of rural women for enhancing agricultural and rural development, for ensuring food and nutrition security and for eradicating rural poverty during its regular discussions on the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas. CSW has also addressed issues related to the situation of rural women in its outcomes. The Economic and Social Council, in its Ministerial Declaration in 2010,² called for concerted action to support rural women's economic empowerment.

9. Although the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) does not have a separate critical area of concern on rural women, it does address their needs and priorities in many of the 12 critical areas of concern. For example, it highlights the need for policies and strategies to improve the situation of rural women producers increase their incomes and provide household food security. Specific measures include facilitating rural women's equal access to resources, employment and training, markets, trade, and information and technology; and strengthening rural women's commercial networks and business services.³ The General Assembly, in its twenty-third special session in 2000, drew attention to the large number of rural women working in the informal economy with low levels of income, limited job and social security and land or inheritance rights. It pointed to the need to enhance rural women's access to productive resources (e.g. land, capital, credit and technology), gainful employment, education and health services, as well as decision-making.⁴

10. Other relevant international outcomes include the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,⁵ the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), the Millennium Development Goals as well as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).⁶ The 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting on MDGs highlighted rural women as critical agents for enhancing agricultural and rural development and food security and pledged to ensure equal access for rural women to productive resources, land, financing, technologies, training and

¹ See, for example, the Rural Worker's Organisations Convention, 1975 (No. 141) and the Rural Worker's Organisations Recommendation, 1975 (No.149) and the Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No.129)

² http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/julyhls/pdf10/2010_ecosoc_highlevel_segment_ministerial_declaration.pdf.

³ *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

⁴ General Assembly resolution S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.

⁵ *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

⁶ See <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=150>

markets.⁷ Member States reaffirmed those commitments in the Istanbul Programme of Action.⁸

11. The Rome-based specialized organizations, FAO, IFAD, and WFP, have a special mandate that covers agriculture, rural development and food and nutrition security. Many recent initiatives have brought new attention to the important role of women in the agricultural production in addressing food and nutrition insecurity and promoting broad-based poverty reduction worldwide.

12. Yet, while there is an impressive body of legislative and normative work addressing women's role as key producers of the world's food and important actors in the rural economy, progress in the implementation of those commitments has been mixed. While rural women's participation in public life, their opportunities for employment, access to and control over productive resources, and access to health facilities have improved, rural women's needs, knowledge, experience and contributions are still not sufficiently taken into consideration in research, data collection, policy development and implementation, resource allocation and programmes in all areas of sustainable development.

III. Key issues and recommendations

A. Introduction

13. Participants recognized the importance of understanding the diversity among rural women on the basis of age, civil status, culture, ethnicity, class, caste and other factors that have to be considered in discussions about rural women's economic empowerment. The EGM also recognized the important role of indigenous rural women as a specific group.

14. Despite women's critical contribution to rural development and notable improvements in both developing and developed countries, rural women's rights and priorities remain insufficiently addressed in legal frameworks, national and local development policies and investment strategies at all levels.⁹ They continue to face serious challenges in carrying out their multiple productive and reproductive roles within their families and communities, in part due to lack of rural infrastructure and essential goods and services. They are at disadvantage as a result of gender-based stereotypes and discrimination that deny them equitable access to opportunities, resources and services.¹⁰ Armed conflict, natural disasters and the HIV and AIDS epidemic are other factors that exacerbate their disadvantages. However, it would be a mistake to portray rural women as a weak and vulnerable category. Rather, they should be regarded as active economic

⁷ See General Assembly resolution 65/1.

⁸ Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries Istanbul, Turkey, 9-13 May 2011 (A/CONF.219/3)

⁹ United Nations (2008). *Women 2000 and Beyond. Rural Women in a Changing World: Opportunities and Challenges*. New York.

¹⁰ Ibid.

agents who are, in various ways and to various degrees, constrained in their roles as diverse as farmers, producers, investors, caregivers, and consumers.

15. The meeting highlighted the importance of recognizing women as actors in a larger complex of social relations and interlinked with political, economic, social, cultural and other structures, rather than as independent players who carry out specific roles and responsibilities in isolation. When women's economic empowerment is seen in a broader context that recognizes social relations and structures, women are not considered as autonomous, but rather as a part of families, communities, and other groups.

16. The recommendations of the EGM are addressed to a wide range of stakeholders, including ministries of agriculture and natural resources (fisheries and forestry), agrarian reform, rural development, trade and finance, health, education, science and technology, labor, environment; national gender equality machineries; donor countries; multilateral agencies; funding agencies; research and academic institutions; employer organizations; trade unions; professional and trade associations; farmers' organizations; rural women's organizations; and the private sector.

B. The impact of economic policy choices on gender equality

17. While the perspectives of the participants were diverse, there was a strong consensus around the negative impact of globalization, neoliberal economic policy choices, and the economic and food crises on social and economic development, food and security and livelihoods and gender equality and women's empowerment.

18. Neo-liberal models of market-led growth accompanied by certain economic and trade policy choices have proven to be problematic for much of the world's population, including rural women, men, and their communities. These policy choices assumes that free trade, investment liberalization, private sector and financial system deregulation, and the privatization of public-owned enterprises and services would lead to sustained economic growth, improved productive capacities, and higher growth and productivity, all leading to increased employment opportunities, improved food security, and better lives overall. Yet, the results of these policy choices—typically treated as “gender-neutral”—have been mixed, with women and men impacted differently through the distribution of key economic and financial resources through markets and state interventions that are anything but gender neutral.¹¹

19. While neoliberal trade policies have trended towards the promotion of exports in recent decades, a number of factors, such as increased competition at the global market and the removal of tariffs and other trade taxes, have led to decreased revenue from trade.

¹¹ While economic growth was positively correlated with progress on the Standardized Indicator of Gender Equality (SIGE) for 95 countries between 1980 and 1995, for the two highest income quartiles but negatively correlated in the lowest income quartiles, higher rates of economic growth in the poorer countries were associated with a deterioration in overall gender equality (Stephanie Seguino 2009, in United Nations (2009) *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development. Women's Control over Economic Resources and Access to Financial Resources including Microfinance*. ST/ESA/326

At the same time, fiscal policies have focused on debt management and budget stabilization, resulting in reduced government spending and the adoption of increased user fees for essential rural infrastructure and public services (e.g. reduced health care and social services). Limited or decreasing public budgets have, in turn, made these services less accessible to women living in rural areas, while at the same time increasing their burden of unpaid care work and subsequently reducing their time to engage in economic activities. The result has been an increasing divide between those who can afford to pay for basic services and those who do not have the financial means to access them.

C. The impact of the financial and food price crises on gender equality

20. The financial crisis, which began in 2008, subsequent economic instability, and the more recent economic crisis of 2011, have led to great economic uncertainty and social repercussions across the globe and impacted developing *and* developed countries, including in some cases ‘reverse’ migration of retrenched workers to the rural areas. Gains that had been made in securing better working conditions for workers stalled and in fact, regressed in many cases. These crises pose additional challenges to women who are already faced with systemic and structural factors causing gender disparities in the economy, including labour markets.

21. Poor rural women and men have borne the brunt of these crises, in particular the impact of rising food prices, and consequently have been forced to cut down on food consumption. Increased food prices have also meant that women and men, particularly those already struggling to feed themselves and their families, have less money to invest in education and health care. Experience from past crises suggests that the tendency to cut back public expenditures during times of financial and economic crisis and decreases in household incomes often lead to withdrawal of girls from school to help with the increasing demand for unpaid care work in the households. Without a broader social protection system, rural women and men try to address shortfalls themselves.

D. Rural women in agricultural and non-farm work: Farmers, producers, workers and entrepreneurs

22. Agriculture is a livelihood source for about 86 percent of rural women and men and provides employment for about 1.3 billion smallholder farmers and landless workers. Rural off-farm and non-farm employment plays a critical role for rural women’s economic empowerment, rural development, food security, and poverty reduction.¹²

¹² Though the number of women who secured paid jobs outside the agricultural sector increased between 1990 and 2008, women have generally failed to access higher-level positions (Millennium Development Goals Report, 2010). Current data point to the importance of non-farm employment for generating household income. In Africa, non-farm activities account for 42 percent of household income; in Latin America it is 40 per cent, and in Asia, it is 32 percent (FAO (2002). Promoting farm/non-farm linkages in developing countries. Case studies from Africa and Latin America. Rome: FAO.; FAO/IFAD/ILO (2010a). Making Migration Work for Women and Men in Rural Labor Markets. Gender and Rural Employment Policy Brief #6.

23. Rural women are engaged in agricultural production at different levels and in various functions. For example, their work ranges from producing food as small-scale farmers, agricultural workers on other people's land, to off-farm activities, such as agro-processing and marketing. While rural women and men both work long hours, time use surveys indicate that in many countries, rural women typically work longer hours than men. This is, in part because of their different types of responsibilities within households, communities and social networks and in part due to the informal and unpaid nature of much of their work, including caregiving of children, the sick and the elderly. These unpaid activities are essential to the livelihoods and well-being of families, households and communities.

24. Rural off-farm employment as local agents of seeds and fertilizer companies and trading enterprises; workers in transport, infrastructure development and services delivery including education, health, finance; and as workers or owners of local shops and restaurants, may provide rural women (and men) with economic opportunities to reduce their dependency on agriculture and to help them weather economic and environmental shocks that affect agriculture. Women who engage in cottage, small, and medium enterprises have benefited in various ways both economically and socially, including through improved self-esteem, self-reliance, and respect in the community and beyond.

25. Migration out of rural areas to urban areas and even other countries is increasingly becoming an important livelihood strategy for women and men. The participants noted that in some regions,¹³ when men are absent from the household—for reasons of migration or other causes such as divorce, incarceration or death, rural women take on additional roles and tasks traditionally carried out by men. In many cases, this situation presents women with increased economic opportunities while at the same time adding to their already heavy burden of work.

26. The last twenty years have seen an increased number of large retailers (e.g. supermarkets) and contractors at the interface with producers along different value chains and a reduction in the number and size of informal markets. Global value chains and markets have introduced very unequal power relations. Large corporations have access to information that allows them to exploit the relationships with farmers for maximum gains to themselves at the expense of farmers. Moreover, smallholder farmer—both women and men—find it difficult to meet the challenges posed by these supermarket chains.

27. Women and men are involved and provide their labour in many agricultural value chains, as farm managers, contractors, wage workers, and unpaid family workers. While women participate significantly, the terms and conditions of their work are often unjust, insecure and unfavorable, with limited and unequal rewards for their inputs. It is still unclear how new chains are likely to provide the spaces from which individuals and groups can challenge norms and values that constrain their ability to use the new opportunities to their advantages. Moreover, value chain development needs to uphold the principles of dignified 'decent work' which includes creating permanent jobs,

¹³ For example, the Caribbean Community and Common Market, the Middle East and Northern Africa, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

guaranteeing rights at work, extending social protection, and promoting social dialogue. There is also much to be gained from analyzing chains that are controlled by women.

28. A focus on value chains, however, may result in an ‘exaggerated’ focus on a particular strand of people’s livelihood strategies, leading to a neglect of other strategies such as crop diversification, livestock, aquaculture, wild foods and products, and other non-farm employment. Value chains may also intensify household-level struggles between women and men around land use, selection of crops, and decision-making regarding income and expenditure. Moreover, specific value chains may actually undermine food security and nutrition objectives due to competing land use within households and communities.

29. Accessing decent and productive rural employment and income-generating activities is still a great challenge for rural women and men. Whether or not paid employment leads to empowerment depends very much on the quality of the work in terms of whether workers’ rights and standards are upheld and the voices of women and men are respected in their work. It also depends on whether home-based activities are recognized and protected through social schemes of pension, security and health insurance; childcare; and sharing of responsibilities within the household.

30. Work standards and rights in the rural employment sector (agricultural and non-farm) are generally poor or absent, and where present, not well-respected, in part because of the informal nature of the employment, but also because of a lack of monitoring of the implementation of national legislation and regulation. Human rights and labour principles are, to a large extent, not respected. This includes, but is not limited to, a lack of freedom of association and collective bargaining, forced labour, discrimination and harassment, and presence of child labour. Rural women (and women in general) typically face different challenges than their male counterparts once they are employed. While rural women and men both face job insecurity and a lack of social protection, women experience additional gender-based discrimination such as sexual harassment and limited or nonexistent rights for pregnant women or women with children.

31. Evidence from the implementation of the Mahatma Ghandi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) through a state funded scheme, demonstrates that a social protection programme with a rights-based legal guarantee is one effective way leading to economic and social empowerment, reducing rural women’s and men’s vulnerability to crises, and empowering women and men to be able to make informed and equitable life choices. MGNREGA is designed to guarantee women equitable work and wages, with a target of 33 percent every year for women, and to provide child care facilities at work sites. The programme has provided employment to 52 million households, increased income and economic opportunities for disadvantaged groups, decreased out-migration, and positively impacted life in rural areas.

32. Financial services (credit, savings, insurance, etc.) and microfinance systems (credit/loans, etc.) have been tied to the development of rural women’s enterprises and the strengthening of their income-generating and livelihood strategies as producers and

non-farm entrepreneurs. Women producers and entrepreneurs could gain from improved access to financial services that recognize the broader set of assets over which women have control. Particular constraints to women's access to financial services¹⁴ include policy and legal barriers as well as cultural "norms" that prevent women from keeping bank accounts or entering into contracts without their husbands or another man. Registration procedures (e.g. for businesses, bank accounts, and entering into contracts) can benefit women if they recognize the differential time and mobility challenges of rural women and men and take into account the specific challenges of rural women (e.g. by being more locally accessible (or mobile) and providing shorter, cost-effective registration procedures). Rural women in post-conflict settings, where employment opportunities are limited, face additional challenges in starting up and sustaining enterprises due to lack of capital and access to financial services.

33. Microfinance systems have produced contrasting results for rural women. While research has illustrated positive impacts with regards to changes in consumption patterns, access to health care and contraception, improved decision-making power, better mobility, access to property, and a decrease in domestic violence, other studies have pointed to negative impacts such as women getting indebted, conflict between husbands and wives, and increases in domestic violence. Understanding gender dimensions and the subsequent relevant interventions in microfinance are crucial for improving livelihoods in a sustainable manner.

34. Formal and non-formal education (short trainings, farmer field schools, extension, etc.) and informal education (media, community gatherings, etc.) contribute positively to rural women's potential to access productive, income-generating opportunities and decent work. It helps them boost their confidence and skills, and enables them to negotiate for better conditions and organize with others to do so. However, in many parts of the world, religious, political, social, and economic constraints limit girls' and women's access to education. These include restrictions in mobility and preferential schooling of boys over girls among others.

E. Rural women's access to and control over land¹⁵

35. Land is not only an economic and productive resource, but equally a source of security, status and recognition. It is a social resource that is managed at once by multiple rules, norms and regulations – both those enforced by the state as well as those imposed by communities and families. Women's access to and control over land is a key factor in

¹⁴ Rural finance includes retail and wholesale institutions that offer financial services to the poor and extremely poor including informal private sector providers (e.g. large-scale farmers, traders, processors, employers as part of sharecropping or leasing arrangements, putting out systems, market transactions, employment), informal mutual financial mechanisms (rotating or accumulating savings and credit associations, burial societies), formal sector providers (banks, post-offices, insurance companies), and specialist microfinance institutions (for poor, extreme poor), membership-based financial organizations (credit unions, cooperatives, and integrated rural development programs (through programs and links to financial institutions) Source: World Bank, FAO, IFAD (2009). Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook (Agriculture and Rural Development Series). Washington: World Bank.

¹⁵ While other resources are also important, the EGM focused on issues related to land.

rural women's economic empowerment and can potentially lead to gender equality alongside addressing material deprivation and food and nutrition insecurity.

36. Land rights do not remain static over time. Political events and changes in law or state priorities, and changes in technology can lead to rural women's equal access to land. However, these processes have often been confronted by social, religious, political and economic resistances. For example, land titling can secure women's rights when land is mandatorily registered in the name of both spouses. However, titling can also formalize inequality, by fixing land distributions where they were earlier negotiable (e.g. access to common property resources). Pressures on land add to the complexities mediating women's access, including the location of land and whether it is linked to natal, marital, or other access; modes of acquisition (e.g. through inheritance, markets, state); the type and extent of rights (legal, customary), and; the larger religious and political economy context that shapes state policies and priorities within which women's and men's claims are negotiated.¹⁶

37. In many parts of the world, the main obstacles to rural women's access to land and their ability to enhance productivity are institutional barriers to their social recognition. For example, women in many parts of the world are still primarily seen as dependent wives and mothers, and as such are expected to support men and their family throughout their life cycle. As long as they perform this role, their rights are protected. In many parts of the world, divorced and separated women are most vulnerable, as without male protection and supervision, they are viewed as deviants, and denied their rights. In addition, across countries, rural women are often marginalized in decision-making and leadership positions, including in relation to land. Women are inadequately represented in relevant community committees, customary councils and state institutions, including legal decision-making bodies.

38. The EGM also noted the phenomenon of commercial land acquisition, often referred to as 'land grabbing.' Two-thirds of the land acquired by national and foreign companies and governments has been in Africa, followed by South East Asia, especially Indonesia and Malaysia, the investment here mainly being in oil palm. In addition, the growing emphasis on biofuels has implications for women in developing countries both because there is increased competition for available biofuels and because sizable amounts of fertile agricultural land formerly used for food production is being diverted to growing biofuels (e.g., maize, sugar cane), thus impacting food security.

39. There is an overwhelming paucity of data on the gender-specific impact on "land grabs." In the case of some Asian countries, where there are commitments to redistribute land and resettle the marginalized, recent trends of states acquiring land on behalf of private capital point to further dispossessing the poor and women.¹⁷ Reform policies tend to have a male bias, by registering land in male names, ignoring multiple interests and uses of different qualities of land, and making compensation payments in the name of

¹⁶ Rao, Nitya (2011). Women's Access to Land: An Asian Perspective. Expert paper prepared for Expert Group Meeting (EGM/RW/2011/EP.3)

¹⁷ Ibid.

men only. Even where joint titling has been introduced, as in India since the 1990s or Vietnam, this has not happened. Land records have not been updated to include women's names. Small-holders and small plots, especially those belonging to women, continue to be excluded from state support and services.

40. Governments play a crucial role in enabling a fair and just environment for women to claim their rights to land. Measures can include legal and policy reforms on equitable land laws; capacity development among officials in charge of implementing such reforms; building awareness among the population on their rights and providing legal (both statutory and traditional) aid and appeal mechanisms. Providing women with free access to personal identification documents (i.e. identity card, social security number) is another good practice for women to be recognized as full citizens.

F. Rural women's access to research and technology

41. The extent to which rural women participate in technology research and development, together with their access to new technologies are important factors that impact women's economic empowerment, both in relation to agricultural production and other enterprises (e.g. value addition, processing, storage).¹⁸ Women's needs, interests, and constraints, in relation to the development of crop varieties, improvements in livestock breeding, post-harvest storage and processing, as well as improvements in technologies to support different non-farm enterprises, often differ from men's depending on their responsibilities, which are dynamic and change in response to social and economic conditions.¹⁹

42. The public sector plays an important role in research, development, and market development of agricultural inputs, such as seeds and technology, and in supporting women producers, vendors, and entrepreneurs in accessing locally adapted or developed technologies. For example, local crops that are important to women (e.g. millet, sorghum, leafy vegetables) may not be of interest to private sector researchers who tend to concentrate on internationally traded crops. More focus on value chain research and development on crops and livestock that are typically under women's responsibility is needed.

43. The capacity of rural women to adopt new technologies depends on a number of factors, including time and labour demands (e.g. caring for children, the sick and elderly, or undertaking labour-intensive domestic chores) and financial investment requirements, particularly in the early stages. Gender-responsive approaches to technology transfer (e.g. the participation of women in the early stages of the development of the technology) can

¹⁸ Technology research and development includes, for example, building on women's indigenous technological skills and know-how of ecosystems, crops, medicinal plants, livestock, water and fuel sources, production, harvesting, storage, and value addition processes; as well as other knowledge and skills such as those applied for caring children, the elderly, and the ailing. Another important dimension is in improved and ergonomically aware agricultural implements and tools that consider women's needs and address their labor and time constraints.

¹⁹ Rathgeber, Eva (2011). Rural Women's Access to Science and Technology in the Context of Natural Resource Management. Expert paper prepared for Expert Group Meeting. EGM/RW/2011/EP.6.

generate a high level of uptake. However, farm and non-farm research is often carried out without attention to the existing technical knowledge held by rural women and men. Most “indigenous,” “traditional,” or “local” knowledge is based on generations of experience and field testing and in fact, many poor women and men have complex practical understandings of agro-biodiversity, agriculture, fisheries, horticulture, forestry and health. However, these knowledge systems are gradually being eroded.

44. The breakdown of rights regimes related to indigenous or traditional knowledge is leading to the loss of biodiversity. New intellectual property rights regimes tend to assign intellectual property rights and benefits to groups of male community members. The importance of Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) refers to indigenous peoples’ rights of self-determination strictly linked to peoples’ land and territorial rights through their customary and historical links.²⁰ FPIC typically allows indigenous people to reach consent and adopt decisions that are in concurrence with their own traditional systems of resource use and management.²¹

45. Farmers’ groups have proven to be effective in terms of sharing knowledge and disseminating new technologies, while formal and community-based agricultural extension is still an important driver in technology introduction and adoption.²² Participatory research and development has also contributed to the adoption of technologies.

46. In the past two decades, there has been increased interest in the development and adaptation of information and communication technologies for rural areas, in particular since they have proven effective for rural development and rural communities’ access to critical information. Electronic and mobile (e- and m-) technologies can enhance rural women’s access to information (on financial services, inputs, processing, transportation of goods to urban and peri-urban markets, access to education and health services) which can strengthen their agricultural productivity and economic enterprises. For example, in Uganda, rural women combine a listening club for rural radio with mobile telephony to make better contacts with other parts of their country and to build greater opportunities to enhance their agricultural production. In the Sikasso region of Mali, rural women combine video and photos to help marketing their products. Women fish processors in Benin, together with the NGO AquaDeD, use video, television, and mobile phones to learn new fish preservation techniques and to sell their produce to Togo and Nigeria.

47. To a great extent, rural populations, and specifically rural women have not been widely consulted in climate change adaptation/mitigation research (e.g. drought resistant crop varieties) even though they are often the most impacted by changes in weather and ecosystems.

²⁰ C169 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989. <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C169>

²¹ Groppo, P. and C. Cenerini. (2010) A Territorial Development Vision Oriented to Indigenous Peoples: A Possible Path, FAO, Rome.

²² Rathgeber, 2011.

48. Green technologies including renewable energy provide important tools for climate change mitigation. In Bangladesh, the winner of a Right Livelihoods Award, Grameen Shakti, has used micro-credit to develop one of the first successful market-based models of taking renewable energy technologies to rural women and men and has emphasized community participation and motivation as the basis of all its activities.

G. Effective national and local institutions

49. The EGM recognized the importance of representative and accountable forms of government for the empowerment of rural women. Building an enabling environment for the participation of rural women in national and local institutions requires addressing the social relations and structures that limit rural women's place and voices²³ in leadership and decision-making and facilitating mechanisms for ensuring accountability, participation and transparency in decision-making.

50. Structural discrimination which often characterizes the written rules and procedures of institutions at all levels (e.g. ministries, parliament, producers' and traders' associations, cooperatives, unions, research institutes, labour councils, private sector companies, registered NGOs, and finance institutions) as well as the unwritten rules that characterize and guide customary practices and traditions in extended family and kinship systems, clans, and women's and community organizations must be addressed. Social relations also often guide or limit rural women's participation and representation in community associations (e.g. forest committees, grazing committees, water-use groups, self-help groups, women's groups, farmer field schools) – associations that play important roles in the functioning of rural communities. Indigenous women face specific struggles to gain space in national and international institutions and political and economic fora to ensure their rights, particularly in relation to foreign trade and global markets.

51. Institutional change is required to transform institutional mechanisms, policies, and decision-making processes in ways that are more responsive to the needs and interests of rural women and men. In this way, institutions can become more inclusive of both rural men and women (including migrant and seasonal workers) working in formal and informal employment. Effective institutions need to take into account the effects of gender-based discrimination and work toward transformation that benefits women and men.

52. Women are typically under-represented in cooperatives farmers' and producers' organizations, and rural workers' organizations, both in terms of general membership and participation in key decision-making bodies. Women may be constrained in their participation due to mobility restrictions and other constraints such as lack of transport, security concerns, childcare and other caregiving responsibilities. Lack of familiarity with policies and rules (due to limited access to formal and informal education) may also limit women's effective participation in different institutions.

²³ The term "voices" is included here to recognize diversity of women, including indigenous women and women in different socio-economic and geographic groups.

53. Farmers' and producers' organizations play a key role in representing the interests of rural constituents and in addressing rural poverty. Farmers' and producers' organizations refer to independent, non-governmental, membership-based rural organizations of part- or full-time, self-employed smallholders and family farmers, pastoralists, artisanal fishers, landless people, small entrepreneurs, and indigenous peoples. They range from formal groups covered by national legislation, such as cooperatives and national farmers' unions, to self-help groupings and associations. They can be organized at the local, regional, national and international levels. Farmers' organizations can be mixed organizations, representing women and men, or can be single-sex organizations.

54. Farmers' organizations typically show great gender disparity in their leadership structures. While women may comprise 30-50% of their members, and while women farmers make enormous contributions to agricultural production, marketing, and livelihoods, women have a weak presence in the leadership of farmers' organizations. In some cases, a few women leaders at the national level have effectively represented the interests of grassroots women but women's groups tend to remain confined to the local level for the most part. While women may be well represented in mixed organizations, as members, there are generally few women in leadership positions – and increasingly fewer as one moves from local to regional, national, or international level. Thus, women's role in agriculture remains largely unrecognized in policy and resource allocation; and the benefits of organized actions are not significantly felt by women farmers.

55. Farmers' organizations can also be more effective by institutionalizing training that recognizes the differential needs and challenges of women and men farmers. Trainings can be targeted and decentralized to empower women to carry out their own training and can include exchange visits, farmer to farmer exchanges, and visits to research institutions. They should be flexible, taking into account rural women's time constraints, especially those of mothers of small children, and in general, the social dynamics that affect their participation dynamics (e.g. mobility, caregiving responsibilities). Farmers' organizations need to make provision for, and include in budgets, day care facilities to enable women to participate in training to strengthen their livelihoods and overall well-being as well as build the skills and confidence to take on greater leadership roles within their organizations.

56. Both in terms of institutional change and in terms of social relations, there has been growing attention to the importance of engaging men in working towards social change that addresses gender-based discrimination and inequalities. NGOs, United Nations agencies, and governments have undertaken different initiatives to engage men actively in transforming gender relations in communities and households. Examples include CARE's Abatangamuco, "Bringers of Light" programme in Burundi. Greater alliances to strengthen approaches to engage men in transforming gender relations at all levels have also taken hold, including the global "Men Engage Global Alliance."

H. Enabling legal and policy environment

57. A number of international commitments are in place which guide Member States and other stakeholders on how to concretely address gender-based discrimination in rural areas. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)²⁴ moves beyond guarantees of equality and equal protection before the law in existing legal instruments and sets out measures for the achievement of equality between men and women, regardless of their marital status, religious belief, age, disability and national origin, in all aspects of political, economic, social, family and cultural life. Article 14 on rural women is the only text in international law that specifically addresses rural women. It is closely linked to other articles, particularly articles 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 16 (on stereotypes, political life, education, employment, health, economic and social benefits, marriage and family life).

58. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women continues to highlight its concerns in the implementation of Article 14 during dialogues with Governments. These include: i.) a lack of attention to gender issues in comprehensive/systematic strategies and plans for poverty reduction and in development programmes; ii.) unequal allocation of resources between urban and rural areas; iii.) under-representation of rural women in decision-making processes; iv.) lack of access to justice, education, health care, ownership of land, inheritance, credit facilities and community services; v.) migration of young people including young women from rural to urban areas that impacts gender roles in rural communities; and vi) lack of sufficient information and statistical data, including sex-disaggregated data on situations of rural women.²⁵

59. The Millennium Development Goals, particularly MDG3 on gender equality, are an important reference point for ensuring accountability to rural women in policy development and implementation. The achievement of MDG 3 is closely linked with the MDG targets on reducing extreme poverty and hunger.

60. The EGM pointed to the need for enabling national policies and legislation that recognize and translate agricultural and non-farm labour into decent work on the basis of international (ILO) work standards and rights, and provide social protection for rural women, men, and their dependents in order for them to fully enjoy the benefits of their labour and take advantage of economic opportunities. Rural and other institutions need to enable women to transform their agricultural work into economic empowerment through, for example, recognizing and guaranteeing their rights to land and other productive resources and access to services. This requires strengthening institutional resources and capacities to translate policies and legislation into action in rural areas along with investment in the needed infrastructure.

²⁴Xiaoqiao Zou (2011). Trends in the Implementation of Article 14 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Expert paper prepared for Expert Group Meeting. EGM/RW/2011/EP.4.

²⁵Ibid.

61. National level policies that support women's rights to resources and services are important for strengthening rural institutions. The North Atlantic Autonomous Region of Nicaragua (which has had an ethnic autonomous regime for over two decades) adopted a gender policy that emphasizes the rights of indigenous and rural women. The region incorporated gender-sensitive tools in the public sector planning, agricultural and rural development, which are mandatory for all state officials, with the goal of including a gender, intercultural and intergenerational approach. The policy is linked to a national programme which supports Nicaraguan women's ownership of economic resources.

62. To provide viable economic alternatives to migration for rural women, public policy needs to ensure improved agricultural productivity and incomes for women through reducing gender disparities in access to productive resources and stimulating rural employment and entrepreneurship, lightening women's workloads and providing infrastructure and services including childcare. Policies and legal frameworks also need to better support the lives and livelihoods of women migrants by supporting them in accessing residency, social and employment rights, and by promoting female migrant associations and workers' unions, for instance. National labor and migration legislation must also include legal protection for migrants and uphold international labor standards.

63. With specific reference to value chains and markets, there is a clear need to ensure balance between policy and investment choices that favor export-oriented agricultural commodities and the need for strengthening domestic markets that may offer potential decent work opportunities for rural women. For example, policy trends toward export-oriented international trade over the past twenty years have increased formal, labor-intensive, low-skilled, low value-added jobs in developing countries – most of which have been filled by women.

64. While there has been a decline in investment over the past two decades in rural development and the agriculture sector, there has also been renewed interest in investing in agriculture as Governments respond to global crises and see opportunities for new approaches to agricultural and rural development as well as social protection and decent work in rural areas.

65. To support gender-sensitive policy-making, there is a continued need for improved statistics and data collection and analysis to assess the long-term impacts of policy choices, investments and programmes on rural women, their families and communities. Robust data and information are needed, but must go beyond the numbers of women and men participating or being represented, and beyond the income generated by women and their gains in productivity due to a certain intervention. A more holistic understanding of the impacts of policy choices over the long term on rural women and men must be prioritized.

I. Recommendations

The participants of the Expert Group Meeting recognize

- that rural women's and men's lives, their livelihoods, and their roles and responsibilities are multi-dimensional and dynamic. They are impacted by policies, institutional mechanisms and rules, as well as by the gender relations institutionalized in households, communities, and beyond. This means that policies and programmes must be informed by participatory process involving rural women and men and take into account the diversity and complexity of factors that underpin the well-being and empowerment of women, men, girls and boys;
- rural women as agents of change who contribute to local and national economies, agriculture, rural development, household livelihoods, food and nutrition security and social well-being. We recognize the role of men as agents of change alongside women;
- women as leaders, decision-makers, producers, workers, entrepreneurs, and service providers in national and local policies, alongside men;
- the diversity of rural women by age; religion; ethnicity; their social, economic, political and ecological status, and other factors. We respect their cultural identities, languages, worldviews and their individual and collective rights;
- the full enjoyment of indigenous women and men, as a collective or as individuals, to land, territories and productive resources based on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- that Governments have the responsibility to promote, protect, and fulfill the human rights of rural women and men to ensure their economic, social and cultural wellbeing;
- that violence against women persists in all countries and is a major obstacle to rural women's empowerment and enjoyment of their rights;
- the multifaceted characteristics of rural economies creating both opportunities and challenges for rural women and men in the farm and off-farm sectors;
- the many inequalities and challenges faced by different groups of rural women and men in accessing economic and social opportunities and services. Rural development frameworks have not been able to successfully address the range of gender-specific challenges rural women face;
- that macro-economic policies have not given adequate attention to the empowerment of rural women and that trade, employment and fiscal policy decisions have tended to contribute to the economic marginalization of rural women.

Therefore, new rural development frameworks need to take into account the risks and opportunities faced by diverse groups of rural women and men in the changing global context. These frameworks should ensure the compliance and accountability of state and non-state actors operating at macro, meso and micro levels to mitigate these risks and accelerate access to opportunities and respond to the rights, aspirations and needs of rural women and men.

National and international governance systems need to promote inclusive economic growth strategies that generate long-term societal benefits, including improved well-being of rural women, and reduced inequality and poverty in rural areas as well as reduced inequality between rural and urban areas.

Effective decentralization can be an important strategy for rural women's economic empowerment, and can be conducive to a fuller engagement of rural women in public affairs, provided it is accompanied by attitudinal change, capacity development, and inclusive and participatory processes for the formulation and implementation of policies, strategies, programs and projects.

The green economy, including environmentally sustainable agriculture, can provide policy instruments to achieve sustainable development and help mitigate climate change for current and future generations. Given rural women's key contributions to agriculture, rural livelihoods and sustainable development, they need to play an important role in defining, structuring and implementing the green economy.

The implementation of these recommendations has to be in accordance with international conventions and human rights standards, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the International Covenant on the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Rio Conventions, relevant ILO conventions and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and other international commitments such as the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

The following recommendations are addressed to a range of different stakeholders, including Governments, the United Nations system, the private sector and civil society, including rural organizations:

1. Economic policies, growth and equality

1. Ensure that economic policies fully prioritize decent work and employment generation in order to lead to a sustainable increase in the disposable incomes, food and nutrition security and improved living conditions of rural women and men, girls and boys.

2. Facilitate an institutional and policy environment that promotes decent work for rural women, including migrant women, in both the formal and informal economy, including social protection, collective bargaining, and freedom of association.
3. Increase investments in infrastructure; essential services; indigenous, traditional and new technologies; and productive capacities in rural areas to reduce rural women's unpaid care work and enhance their sustainable livelihoods. Encourage men to take on caregiving and household tasks.
4. Develop and implement policies and programmes that support rural women's, farmers' and producers' organizations to compete effectively in the agricultural sector.
5. Promote rural and indigenous women's knowledge, products and services; and protect these from piracy, ensure fair benefit-sharing, and protect their intellectual property rights according to the Convention on Biological Diversity.
6. Develop and implement policies, programmes and incentives to enable rural women's active and effective engagement in the global value chain as producers, entrepreneurs, suppliers, workers and consumers in local and global markets by promoting capacity development on quality assurance and standards, and public procurement.
7. Introduce tax systems and other fiscal and macro-economic measures that redistribute wealth to poor segments of society, including rural women.
8. Develop and adopt measures that offset the negative impact of global and regional trade agreements on rural women's production and livelihoods, including 'special and preferential treatment' for rural women producers and their products.
9. Emphasize channels for development, testing, application and dissemination of frameworks and tools designed to assess the impact of participatory approaches while including women farmers' knowledge and perceptions, thereby improving local technology absorption and innovation.

2. Equal access to and control of land and other rural productive resources

10. Ensure that national laws and policies guarantee women's right to land, including upon divorce and separation, and right to inheritance in both customary and statutory systems.
11. Ensure that laws and policies on land are implemented and known by the target communities and that title holders clearly understand the type of land title they hold or wish to apply for.

12. Support the development and implementation of gender-sensitive land and property laws, both statutory and customary, by providing: i) capacity development among decentralized officials; ii) dialogue with, and awareness building among the target population in their own languages using a variety of media, and iii) legal aid and appeal mechanisms in relation to land and property issues (both in statutory and customary law).
13. Promote changes in customary law to ensure women have access, on an equal basis with men, to land over their lifetime, irrespective of their marital status.
14. Ensure that the option of joint titles is provided during land reform processes and when land records are being updated.
15. Take measures to require the consent of each spouse for the sale of land, or its use as collateral.
16. Ensure that in the registration of land for collective use, especially among indigenous peoples, the names of all female and male members of the community who use the land, are clearly stated.
17. Institute and enforce policies that limit the quantity of national land that foreign countries and corporations can buy. Hold Governments accountable for “land grabbing” which is detrimental to women’s and men’s livelihoods and employment opportunities and undermines food and nutrition security and food sovereignty.
18. Take measures to protect the rights of rural women affected by land expropriation, including through stakeholder meetings.
19. Ensure that changes in land administration or changes in land tenure systems do not cause environmental damage, do not destroy the ecosystems on which women and men depend for their productive and reproductive work and their cultural wellbeing, and do not have a negative impact on household food and nutrition security.
20. Prepare resettlement plans, with the agreement and consultation of local communities, including internally displaced people, refugees and returnees, to provide secure land with access to water, fuel, and services, and sustainable alternative s.
21. Enable small-holder farmers and agricultural workers, in particular women, to become more productive, competitive and profitable through strengthening provision of, and linkages to, affordable and labour-saving technologies, inputs, services and access to capacity development, and enhance their market access by identifying and addressing gender specific constraints.
22. Recognize and support women as actors in climate change adaptation and mitigation, disaster risk reduction and resilience strategies (such as protection of water, food, fuel/energy and livelihoods).

23. Develop, in collaboration with the international community, environmental service payment schemes (e.g. carbon, water) taking into account rural women's rights and capacities, and train rural women and men to design, participate in, and make decisions in relation to these schemes to ensure that the benefits accrue to them. There should be full and effective participation in decision-making based on the right of free prior and informed consent of women and men involved, particularly where such schemes concern indigenous peoples' territories.
24. Ensure that rural women and men have access to productive resources and inputs (such as financial resources, extension services, farm technology, fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation) to make the best use of the land available.
25. Take measures to facilitate uptake of technology by rural women by involving them in all stages of research, training, entrepreneurship and innovation.

3. Provision of and entitlement to services

26. Provide the necessary space and infrastructure to establish sustainable community resource centres controlled by rural women where they can easily and freely access updated and pertinent information, education and training, including on health, markets, services and long-distance learning opportunities.
27. Create mechanisms that empower rural producers' and women's organizations to hold public and private sector service providers accountable for the quality and cost of services provided to women and men in rural areas.
28. Promote South-South exchange and use of knowledge, technologies, good practices, and resilience strategies, including through the opportunities provided by information and communication technologies (ICTs) and internet-based technologies.
29. Ensure that access to essential services for poor rural communities is not subject to cost recovery and user fees.
30. Increase rural women's access to financial services, including savings, credit, insurance, and domestic payment services, and economic, financial and business literacy skills, as well as provide support to transition from informal to formal financial services.
31. Support community-managed financial services, and establish monitoring mechanisms on commercially motivated operations in the financial sector.
32. Invest in and create infrastructure, community facilities and on- and off-farm care services for children, elderly and persons with disabilities that reduce rural women's unpaid care work and domestic tasks. Provide for children's basic needs and

education, and work to improve conditions for the elderly and people with disabilities to live in dignity and with self-respect.

33. Recognize and invest in community health insurance to support rural women and caregivers to meet their health needs and support initiatives that provide regular mobile clinics for free health services, including reproductive services (e.g. family planning, pap smears, mammograms, sexually transmitted diseases) that reach all women, including in remote areas on an at least annual basis.

4. Leadership, decision-making and voice

34. Develop programmes and outreach to ensure that rural women are aware of their rights, as well as of existing rural development policies and the roles and duty of national and local government, with the view to enable rural women to hold all duty bearers to account.
35. Strengthen gender-responsive accountability mechanisms to ensure rural women and their organizations can influence policy formulation, implementation, and monitoring at all levels of government, including local and self-governments, on all issues that concern them.
36. Undertake affirmative action, including quotas, to promote rural women's participation in decision-making processes at all levels of government accompanied by relevant capacity development, while also securing men's support to the promotion of women in leadership positions.
37. Take measures to enhance the economic empowerment of different groups of rural women, including through investments in their capacity development, sensitization, sharing of information and lessons learnt at different government levels, in the private sector and civil society.
38. Ensure that gender units are established and/or strengthened at senior levels in sectoral ministries and are supported by adequate budgets and power to ensure that all policies and programmes are gender-sensitive and respond to the concerns of rural women and men.
39. Provide all rural women and men with free-of-charge access to personal identification documents (such as identity cards, social security numbers), so that they are recognized as full citizens with equal access to productive assets and services. It is noted that having identification documents should not be a precondition for women and men to enjoy their rights as citizens.
40. Develop the capacity of rural women's, farmers', fisher and producers' and other organizations to be more inclusive (by gender, age, and ethnicity), including by creating fair and transparent criteria for the inclusion of women in leadership positions in these organizations.

41. Assist informal rural women's groups to affiliate with formal organizations in the areas of their activities (at local/regional/national levels) or to form umbrella organizations and support groups; and facilitate networking among women's organizations and women's rural producer organizations.
42. Promote knowledge sharing, including the transmission and exchange of traditional knowledge, to support rural women in different aspects of their lives and livelihoods.
43. Support regional level dialogues among rural women farmers' organizations to strengthen their capacity to influence global and regional policies in ways that will improve their lives and livelihoods and reduce rural poverty.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

44. Ensure that data collected in household and labour force surveys, agricultural censuses, and population censuses are disaggregated by sex, age, and other variables (i.e. ethnicity, where appropriate), and are analyzed, published, and used for informed policy-making and planning and for the establishment of satellite accounts.
45. Promote the administration of time-use surveys and facilitate their use within national statistical systems.
46. Ensure that the measurement of economic growth includes the contribution of rural women and men in paid and unpaid work in the productive (farm and non-farm) and reproductive sectors.
47. Ensure that available data and information is widely disseminated and accessible to rural women and men in a transparent fashion.
48. Develop the capacities of rural women and their organizations to participate in the conceptualization, collection and use of data and information to advocate with their own governments at national and local levels and hold them accountable.
49. Provide training in participatory methods to scientists and policy-makers at different levels and in different disciplines.

6. Resources

50. Allocate adequate financial resources (by applying the principles of gender-responsive budgeting) in national budgets for the economic empowerment of rural women so as to implement the recommendations.
51. Ensure financial support for rural women's organizations, including for awareness-raising on rural women's rights.

7. UN system

52. The UN system should comply with gender equality and diversity commitments within its own organizations in order to serve as role models for Governments and other organizations and to legitimize policy guidance on gender equality issues in their operations.
53. The UN system, in particular FAO, ILO, the UN Statistics Division, UNESCO, UN-Women and WHO, should improve gender statistics and data disaggregated by sex, age and other variables (i.e. ethnicity) where appropriate, and analyze data on rural-urban disparities. In particular, they should:
- establish multi-disciplinary teams in support of national statistical offices to conceptualize, analyze, and utilize major national surveys and censuses to support gender equality policy processes and economic empowerment of rural women;
 - promote south-south exchanges on information and data collection, analysis, and use, and knowledge management; and
 - strengthen dialogues between users and producers of data in different sectors (e.g. health, education, labour, agriculture and rural development).

ANNEX I

List of participants

Experts and resource persons

Name	Affiliation
Ms. Grace Bediako	Government Statistician, Ghana Statistical Service, Ghana
Ms. Patricia Biermayr-Jenzano	Visiting Scholar, Georgetown University, USA
Mr. Gilles Cliche	Principal researcher, Latin American Center for Rural Development, Chile
Ms. Mildred Crawford	President, Jamaica Network of Rural Women Producers, Jamaica
Ms. Mirna Cunningham Kain	Chair, United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues; Nicaragua
Ms. Cathy Rozel Farnworth	Gender and Social Development Consultant, Pandia Consulting, UK
Mr. Getaneh Gobezie Workineh	Senior Rural Finance Specialist, ACIDI/VOCA, Ethiopia
Ms. Prema Gopalan	Swayam Shikshan Prayog, India
Ms. Carmen Griffiths	Coordinator, GROOTS, Jamaica
Ms. Alice Kachere	Past Board Chairperson, National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi
Ms. Mirlinda Kusari-Purrini	Founder and Executive Director, Women's Business Association of Kosovo, SHE-ERA, Kosovo
Ms. Malika Martini	Social Scientist and Project Manager, International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas, Syria
Ms. Winrose Nyaguthi Mwangi	Grassroots women's organizer, Kenya
Ms. Margaret Odeyk	Board Member, Uganda National Farmers Federation, Uganda
Ms. Christine Okali	International Consultant, University of Sussex, UK
Ms. Rosemary N. Okoh	Professor, Delta State University, Nigeria
Mr. Francis Onyekachi Nwankwo	Member, Scientific Committee, Economic Community of West Africa States, Nigeria
Ms. Esther Penunia	Secretary General, Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development, Philippines
Ms. Nitya Rao	Senior Lecturer, University of East Anglia, UK
Ms. Eva Rathgeber	Adjunct Professor, Institute of Women's Studies, University of Ottawa, Canada
Ms. Hannah Sia Senesie	Gender and Youth Officer, National Federation of Farmers of Sierra Leone
Ms. Zou Xiaoqiao	Member, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; China

Observers

Name	Affiliation
Ms. Victoria Aniaku	Assistant Director of Women in Agricultural Development, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ghana
Ms. Dorcas Coker-Appiah	Executive Director, Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre, Ghana
Ms. Adwoa Kwateng-Kluyitse	Country Director, ActionAid, Ghana
Ms. Diana Jehu-Appiah	International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)
Ms. Annina Lubbock	Rural Sociologist/Consultant representing Women Organizing Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN)
Ms. Maria Clara Mauricio	Directorate for Policies of Rural Women, Brazil
Ms. Angelina Mensah	Director, Environmental Protection Agency
Ms. Esther Owusu	General Secretary for the YWCA of Ghana
Ms. Adwoa Sakyi	Regional Women's Coordinator of Africa, International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)
Ms. Soon-Young Yoon	Chair, NGO Committee on the Status of Women, New York; Permanent Representative, International Alliance of Women

Consultant

Name	Affiliation
Ms. Catherine Hill	Catherine Hill Consulting, Canada

UN system

Organization	Name	Title / Office
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)	Ms. Afua Ansre	National Programme Coordinator, UN-Women Ghana
	Ms. Christabel Dadzie	Event Coordinator, UN-Women Ghana
	Ms. Yassine Fall	Policy Advisor and Cluster Leader, Economic Empowerment Cluster
	Ms. Anna Falth	Economic Specialist, Economic Empowerment Cluster
	Ms. Amanda Foka	UNV, UN-Women Ghana
	Ms. Sylvia Hordosch	Policy Adviser, Leadership and Governance Cluster
	Ms. Saraswathi Menon	Director, Policy Division
	Ms. Josephine Odera	Regional Director, UN-Women West Africa Sub-Regional Office, Dakar, Senegal
Food and Agriculture	Ms. Athifa Ali	Rural Employment Junior Professional Officer
	Ms. Melina Archer	Information Officer, Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division

Organization (FAO)	Ms. Eve Crowley	Deputy Director, Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division
	Ms. Hajnalka Petrics	Gender and Development Officer, Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division
	Mr. Libor Stloukal	Population Policy Officer, Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division
	Ms. Diana Tempelman	Senior Gender Officer, Regional Office for Africa
	Ms. Marcela Villarreal	Director, Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)	Ms. Amina Alhassan Bin Salih	Gender Specialist, Northern Rural Growth Programme, Ghana
	Mr. Ulac Demirag	Country Programme Officer, IFAD Ghana
	Ms. Maria Hartl	Technical Advisor for Gender and Social Equity, Policy and Technical Advisory Division, Programme Management Department, IFAD
	Ms. Marina Kusi	Head, Business Advisory Centres, Rural Enterprises Project
	Ms. Elizabeth Nguah	Business Development and Marketing Officer, Rural Enterprises Project
World Food Programme (WFP)	Mr. Hassan Abdelrazig	P4P Coordination, WFP Ghana
	Ms. Emma Anaman	Senior Programme Assistant / Gender Advocate, WFP Ghana
	Mr. Abdoulaye Balde	Country Director, WFP Rwanda
	Ms. Kaniz Khan	Deputy Country Director, WFP Ghana
	Mr. Ismail Omer	Country Director, WFP Ghana
	Ms. Ngassam Tchatchet	Programme Officer, Women, Children and Gender Service, WFP Rome
International Labour Organization (ILO)	Ms. Mwila Chigaga	Senior Gender Specialist, Regional Office, Addis Ababa

Note-takers

Name	Affiliation
George Adayi-Nwoza Adiah	University of Ghana, Legon
Sylvester Ayambila	University of Ghana, Legon
Dela Tsikata	University of Ghana, Legon

ANNEX II

Programme of Work

Tuesday, 20 September 2011	
Time	Activity
9am	Briefing of experts (election of officers: co-chairs and rapporteur) <i>Closed meeting</i>
10am	Welcome and Opening of the Meeting Organization of work
	Ruby Sandhu-Rojon , Resident Coordinator Saraswathi Menon , Director, UN-Women Policy Division Maria Helena Semedo , FAO Regional Representative
10:30 am	Security Briefing
	Introduction of participants, review of programme of work, and information on working methods - Sylvia Hordosch , UN-Women
11 am	Presentation of background paper and discussion Catherine Hill , Consultant
11:45 am	<i>Coffee/tea break</i>
12:15 pm	Presentations by experts and discussion: Contextual framework on rural women's empowerment
	Christine Okali, UK – <i>Achieving transformative change for rural women's empowerment</i> Zou Xiaoqiao, CEDAW member – <i>Trends in the implementation of Article 14 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</i> Respondents: Francis Onyekachi Nwankwo, Nigeria , ECOWAS Scientific Committee Rosemary N. Okoh, Nigeria , Delta State University
1:15 pm	<i>Lunch</i>
2:15 pm	Presentations by experts and discussion: Rural women's access to productive resources, technology markets and financing
	Nitya Rao, India – <i>Women's access to land: An Asian perspective</i> Mildred Crawford, Jamaica – <i>Rural women's role in agriculture</i> Eva Rathgeber, Canada – <i>Rural women's access to science and technology in the context of natural resource management</i>

	Respondents: Getaneh Gobezie Workineh, Ethiopia, ACDI/VOCA Alice Kachere, Malawi, Smallholders and Farmers' Association; World Farmers Organisation
3:45 pm	<i>Coffee/tea break</i>
4 – 6 pm	Presentations by experts and discussion: Decent and productive employment and income-generating opportunities for rural women
	Cathy Farnworth, UK – Gender-aware value chain development Malika Martini, Algeria/Syria – Women in the rural labor force with a focus on agricultural employment in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Gilles Cliche, Canada/Chile – Rural women's empowerment and non-farm employment: Issues for ICT initiatives and territorial policies in Latin America Mirlinda Kusari, Kosovo – Economic empowerment of rural women through enterprise development in post-conflict settings Respondents: Margaret Odeyk, Uganda, National Farmers' Federation; World Farmers Organisation Prema Gopalan, India, Swayam Shikshan Prayog
7 – 9 pm	Reception Betty Mould Iddrisu, Minister for Education, Ghana Saraswathi Menon, Director, UN-Women Policy Division

Wednesday, 21 September 2011	
7 am – 2 pm	Field trips
	Option 1: Women farmers groups in Ada (outside Accra) – former FAO funded project. The group was supported in using low-cost water harvesting techniques, soil improvement and tested technical advice on agricultural diversification which boosted their economic activities. Option 2: Women’s group in Abokobi (in the Eastern Region). The group processes gari (a staple food made from cassava), and also manages a bread making factory. They will explain their book-keeping practices and how they ensure sustainability of their work. Option 3: Bortianor fish smoking groups (Ga District, Greater Accra Region) – Women will demonstrate their work and how they interact with the larger fishing community including fishermen. They will showcase environmentally friendly ways of smoking fish and the alternative economic activities they engage in during the lean fishing season.
2 pm	<i>Lunch (Hotel)</i>
3 pm	Reflections from the field trips
3:45 pm	Presentations by experts and discussion: Effective national and local institutions: an enabling policy environment that promotes gender responsive rural development and service-delivery
	Myrna Cunningham Kain, Nicaragua – <i>Indigenous perspectives</i> Esther Penunia, Philippines – <i>The role of grass-roots institutions</i> Patricia Biermayr-Jenzano, Argentina – <i>The use of participatory methodologies to increase women farmers’ access to productive resources</i> Respondents: Hanna Sia Senesie, Sierra Leone, National Federation of Farmers Carmen Griffiths, Jamaica, National Network of Grassroots Women’s Groups Winrose Nyaguthi Mwangi, Kenya, Grass-roots women’s organizer
5 pm	<i>Coffee/tea break</i>
5:30 pm	Discussion on data and gender statistics
	Grace Bediako, Ghana – <i>Filling data gaps – the use of gender statistics</i>

Thursday, 22 September 2011	
9 am	Introduction to working groups by Chair
9:30 am	Working groups
11 am	Coffee/tea break
11:30 am	Working groups
1 pm	Lunch
2 pm	Working groups
3:30 pm	Coffee/tea break
4 pm	Working groups
5:30 pm	Plenary session: Reporting back from working group
Friday, 23 September 2011	
9 am	Working groups
11 am	Coffee/tea break
11:30 am	Discussion of findings and recommendations from working groups
1 pm	Lunch
2 pm	Consolidation of findings and recommendations
4 pm	Coffee/tea break
4:30 pm	Adoption of findings and recommendations
5 pm	Responses from the UN system: FAO, IFAD, WFP
5:45 pm	Closing remarks Saraswathi Menon, Director, UN-Women Policy Division

ANNEX III

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

A. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- EGM/RW/2010/BP.1 *Enabling Rural Women's Economic Empowerment: Institutions, Opportunities, and Participation*
Catherine Hill (Consultant)

B. EXPERT PAPERS

- EGM/RW/2011/EP.1 *Gender-Aware Value Chain Development*
Cathy Rozel Farnworth (United Kingdom)
- EGM/RW/2011/EP.2 *Economic Empowerment of Rural Women through Enterprise Development in Post-Conflict Settings*
Mirlinda Kusari-Purrini (Kosovo)
- EGM/RW/2011/EP.3 *Women's Access to Land: An Asian Perspective*
Nitya Rao (United Kingdom)
- EGM/RW/2011/EP.4 *Trends in the Implementation of Article 14 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*
Zou Xiaoqiao (China)
- EGM/RW/2011/EP.5 *Rural Women's Role in Agriculture*
Mildred Crawford (Jamaica)
- EGM/RW/2011/EP.6 *Rural Women's Access to Science and Technology in the Context of Natural Resource Management*
Eva Rathgeber (Canada)
- EGM/RW/2011/EP.7 *Rural Women's Empowerment in Nonfarm Employment Issues for ICT Initiatives and Territorial Policies in Latin America*
Gilles Cliche (Chile)
- EGM/RW/2011/EP.8 *Achieving Transformative Change for Rural Women's Empowerment*
Christine Okali (United Kingdom)
- EGM/RW/2011/EP.9 *Empowering Women in the Rural Labor Force with a Focus on Agricultural Employment in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)*

Malika Martini (Algeria)

- EGM/RW/2011/EP.10 *The Use of Participatory Methodologies to Increase Women Farmers' Access to Productive Resources*
Patricia Biermayr-Jenzano (United States)
- EGM/RW/2011/EP.11 *Role of Institutions in Rural Areas Addressing Women's Needs, With a Focus on Indigenous Women*
Myrna Cunningham Kain (Nicaragua)
- EGM/RW/2011/EP.12 *The Role of Farmers' Organizations in Empowering and Promoting the Leadership of Rural Women*
Esther Penunia (Philippines)

C. RESOURCE PAPERS

- EGM/RW/2011/RP.1 *CEDAW, Rural Women and Climate Change*
The International Alliance of Women, Global Gender Climate Alliance, Co-sponsored by the International Council of Women (ICW-CIF) in collaboration with Women's Environment and Development Organization
- EGM/RW/2011/RP.2 *Empowerment of Women and Gender Mainstreaming in Rural Microfinance*
Getaneh Gobezie (Ethiopia)
- EGM/RW/2011/RP.3 *Decent and Productive Employment and Income-Generating Opportunities for Rural Women*
Margaret Odyek (Uganda)

D. INFORMATIONAL DOCUMENTS

- EGM/RW/2011/INF.1 Concept Note
- EGM/ST/2010/INF.2 Information note for participants
- EGM/RW/2011/INF.3 List of participants
- EGM/RW/2011/INF.4 Programme of work
- EGM/RW/2011/INF.5 Procedures followed in expert group meetings organized by UN-Women