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ACTION FOR THE 2030 AGENDA

PROMOTING SOCIALLY
INCLUSIVE RURAL
DEVELOPMENT IN EUROPE
AND CENTRAL ASIA

Conference report - Summary



Promoting socially inclusive rural development in Europe and Central Asia: Action for the 2030 Agenda

Conference report - Summary

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Acronyms

AFAMMER	Confederation of Federations and Associations of Families and Women from Rural Areas
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
EAFRD	European agricultural fund for rural development
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FEADER	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Fund
GM	Gender mainstreaming
GRAST	Gender and rural advisory services assessment tool
ICTs	Information and communication technologies
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
JCA	Joint call for action
LEADER+	Community Initiative for Rural Development
MAPAMA	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Environment of Spain
REU	FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UN-SWAP	UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VGGT	Voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security
WFP	World Food Programme

Introduction

This report summarizes the experience of the high-level regional conference *Promoting socially inclusive rural development in Europe and Central Asia: Action for the 2030 Agenda*, convened by the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), with the support of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), in Vilnius, Lithuania on 30 January to 01 February 2017.

Background and rationale

The conference was a follow-up to the high-level event *Step It Up Together with Rural Women to End Hunger and Poverty*, convened on 16 December 2016 in Rome, Italy, by FAO, the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU) and the European Commission, in close collaboration with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme (WFP) and UN Women.¹

Many advances have been made towards reducing poverty and achieving food security in Europe and Central Asia. The region has successfully achieved Millennium Development Goal target 1 by halving the proportion of people affected by hunger (FAO, 2015b), and by reducing the proportion of people living on less than USD 1.25 a day by 77 percent in the Caucasus and Central Asia (UN, 2015).

However, extreme poverty and hunger persist. Almost 80 percent of the world's extreme poor live in rural areas, including Europe and Central Asia (FAO, 2015a), therefore the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires a continuing focus on placing the rural poor, both women and men, at the centre of the agenda. As the *FAO State of Food Insecurity 2015* demonstrated, the greater the inequality in the distribution of assets, the more difficult it is for the poor to improve their situation and reduce undernourishment (FAO, 2015b). In order to end extreme poverty and hunger, it is vital that social inequalities are reduced.

One of the most pervasive forms of inequality is based on gender. Therefore, addressing gender inequality is a prerequisite for ending poverty, hunger and need. Much has been accomplished towards gender equality in Europe and Central Asia since a common global agenda for women's empowerment was set at the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995. The number of women in higher education has increased significantly, maternal health has improved exponentially and gender mainstreaming and the collection of sex-disaggregated statistics have been institutionalized by member countries of the region.

However, the implementation of laws and policies remains weak. Barriers in access to services, economic opportunities and justice experienced by disadvantaged groups of the population, and in particular, the largest group – rural women – are ongoing concerns. Their overrepresentation in informal, unpaid and domestic work, and the persistence of stereotypical roles for women and men (UNECE, 2014) exacerbates the situation. This is more severe in rural areas.

The countries of the region are working to ensure food security and decent rural livelihoods for all women and men. These efforts are framed by Article 14 on the rights of rural women of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and international commitments relating to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are explicit across all of the SDGs, both as standalone goal 5 on gender equality and as a cross-cutting theme within more than 30 of the related targets. At least 14 of the 17 goals are relevant to the work of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. From ending poverty and hunger to responding to climate change and sustaining our natural resources, food and agriculture lie at the heart of the 2030 Agenda, which offers a vision of a fairer, more peaceful world in which "no one is left behind". SDG 2 aims to "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable

¹ The website of the event is available at <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/rural-women-end-hunger/en/>.

agriculture". Meeting this target will be fundamental to achieving the other SDGs. Health, education and economic development cannot be improved without better food security and nutrition.

This conference was organized by FAO in cooperation with the European Institute for Gender Equality, an autonomous body of the European Union, also known as the European knowledge centre for gender equality issues.

Conference objectives

The objectives of the regional conference were:

- To provide a platform for discussion about the ways in which policies and practices in the areas of rural development, agriculture, natural resource management and climate change can be made more inclusive, so that the 2030 Agenda can be fully implemented according to its core principle of leaving no one behind.
- To review and learn from the good practices found within gender-responsive rural development, agriculture, natural resource management and climate change in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, in order to become equipped with this knowledge and generate ideas for the next steps.

Participation

The conference brought together over 60 participants (41 women and 21 men) from more than 20 countries in Europe and Central Asia, representing government agencies, civil society, academia, the private sector, FAO, UN Women and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). (The list of participants is available in Annex 3).

Outcomes and results

This conference was the first of its kind to take place at a regional level with a core focus on discussing ways of improving gender mainstreaming in agriculture and rural development within the framework of the SDGs. The ultimate objectives of the conference were to share experiences, inspire people, build networks and take action on reducing the gender gap.

The conference served as a platform for sharing experiences of gender mainstreaming at different levels, from high-level political debates to grassroots interventions. Government representatives, members of parliament, politicians, and members of academia, FAO and EIGE presented examples of good practice and lessons learned on the gender mainstreaming of agricultural and rural development policies. The main outcome of the conference was a "joint call for action", which covers the main recommendations emerging from presentations, group work and discussions. This call reinforces a clear pathway for FAO, governments, civil society and the private sector within which to work together for the achievement of inclusive agriculture, rural development and food security in the framework of the 2030 Agenda.

Opening

The conference was opened by Rolandas Taraskevicius, Deputy Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania, who welcomed the participants and reiterated the Government of Lithuania's commitment to gender equality as a key human rights issue. In Lithuania, women comprise 45 percent of the labour force in the agricultural sector, and if women had the same opportunities as men, productivity would increase even further. The minister briefly described the work being carried out in the country in relation to promoting equal rights and opportunities in the national programmes in accordance with the principal values of the EU. He also expressed his appreciation to the conference organizers, wished the participants a productive exchange of ideas and encouraged delegates to engage in active and open discussions.

Therese Murphy, head of operations at EIGE, used her opening remarks to provide a precis of the work of the European Institute for Gender Equality. EIGE is an autonomous body of the European Union, established to contribute to and strengthen the promotion of gender equality, including gender mainstreaming in all EU policies and the resulting national policies, and the fight against discrimination based on sex, as well as to raise EU citizens' awareness of gender equality. EIGE works in three core areas – gender mainstreaming, gender-based violence and gender statistics and indicators. EIGE collects and analyses gender statistics and provides technical support on gender equality to its key stakeholders – European Union institutions and European member state governments. EIGE also calculates a Gender Equality Index – a unique tool for assessing gender equality in the European Union. It was this solid knowledge base and mandate that initially facilitated cooperation between FAO and EIGE in organizing this conference.

Cristina Amaral, FAO Deputy representative for Europe and Central Asia, emphasized FAO's multidimensional approach to reducing rural poverty including: focusing on increasing women's access to productive resources, decent employment and business opportunities; strengthening the capacity of institutions and services concerned; and supporting measures to increase social protection coverage and effectiveness. Responsible governance and management of natural resources such as land and water that reflect women's priorities and needs, and are grounded in equitable and efficient local institutions, are also an integral part of this approach. She reiterated the conference goal of sharing promising practices and lessons learned from the region to promote gender-responsive rural development, agriculture, natural resource management and climate change in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. This knowledge should better equip the actors for the challenges ahead, upscale solutions and take the initial steps towards implementing the SDGs, guided by gender equality, food security and poverty alleviation, with the principle of "leaving no one behind". On behalf of FAO, she expressed thanks to the Ministry of Agriculture of Lithuania and EIGE for their cooperation in making this conference a reality, as part of the efforts to support the inclusive implementation of the SDGs. Following this, the official opening of the *Promoting socially inclusive rural development in Europe and Central Asia: Action for the 2030 Agenda* conference was declared.

Defining socially inclusive agricultural and rural development policies for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals: What does it entail in practice?

The conference began with a discussion about what socially inclusive agricultural and rural development policies would entail in practice, and what promising examples and cases practised in the region could play a role in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The keynote speakers were high-level experts in the region, and a summary of their main points is provided below:

Carmen Quintanilla Barba, member of parliament and president of AFAMMER, Spain

- We are facing significant demographic challenges. By 2050, the population of Africa will have doubled from 1.2 billion to 2.4 billion inhabitants. By then, Europe will have lost 37 million inhabitants and Spain, with a population of 47 million inhabitants today, will be reduced to 40 million. It is expected that in 2050, the global population will have reached a total of 9.6 billion inhabitants. This demographic challenge necessitates a discussion about food security; and food security is mainly in the hands of women.
- When we talk about rural women, we are talking about women who produce the food for the world; women who care for and raise their children; who take care of the elderly; and who are still, in many countries of the world, invisible. Their work and their participation in the maintenance of sustainable village life remain invisible.
- In Spain, we have a political agenda that supports rural women and we have broken the negative stigma around what it means to be a rural woman: today, being a rural woman means being a woman who builds her own life, takes her own decisions and who wants to continue residing in the village in order to contribute to its sustainable development. Rural women in Spain also want to be part of the movements on women's empowerment and gender equality, and to be present in today's debates on equality and the sustainable development of their villages. Thirty-five years ago, rural women were invisible in society. Today, rural women are recognized as entrepreneurs who generate employment, and who want to take part in social, political and cultural life.
- AFAMMER, the first national association of rural women in Spain was created 35 years ago, and today it is an NGO with 187 000 women members, represented by its President in parliament. It has consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and is engaged in every debate to raise rural women's visibility as a cross-cutting theme. Throughout the history of the AFAMMER organization, its main objectives have included the capacity development of rural women, entrepreneurship, participation in decision-making and the fight against gender-based violence, which, is more likely to be shrouded in silence in rural areas.
- AFAMMER also lobbied for the creation of "co-worker status", a form of registration which acknowledges women who take part in family farming as workers and active members of the farms, rather than "helpers". In Spain, 700 000 holdings are registered in the name of men. Within these holdings, women also work as farmers but they are rarely acknowledged as such. However, in 2011, Spain passed a law on the joint ownership of agricultural holdings and recognition of co-working status is seen as a major achievement.
- Spain then became the third country in Europe to increase the visibility of rural women's work in agricultural holdings. This law recognizes women's work in agricultural holdings and, for the first time, ensures that the administration and representation of the holding is the responsibility of both spouses. Both are registered as heads of holdings, and are each eligible to receive 50 percent of subsidies and grants from the European Union's CAP (Common Agricultural Policy). Furthermore, for the first time in history, these women – who were once invisible but are now co-heads of agrarian holdings – are entitled to social protection schemes and access to pensions. At last, rural women's work is acknowledged and they have access to their own benefits from CAP, their own social protection schemes and their own pensions.
- In Spain, a national action plan to support rural women (2015–2018) has been adopted and comprises 82 interventions with a budget of EUR 23 million over 5 years. It includes measures in: (a) employment – currently, the employment of men in rural areas is 14 points higher than women; (b) participation – women represent 1.5 percent of members of agricultural professional councils, cooperatives and local councils; and (c) reconciliation of family and work life – despite the introduction of one month of paternity leave, women continue to carry the double burden of responsibilities, and there is a need for a change in public attitudes.
- AFAMMER has initiated a project to support rural women, creating a virtual platform, *Ruraltienda*, to support women entrepreneurs, and assist them in marketing products such as cheese and preserves. Another project targets women who want to engage in agro-food entrepreneurship, by increasing their access to ICTs and providing courses in eco-tourism, e-commerce and economic resources management. Through virtual and

face-to-face training, rural women are supported in setting up cooperatives and social businesses to provide domestic and care services to the elderly, in order to improve their quality of life and create employment in rural areas. In Spain, 80 percent of rural tourism accommodation is managed by women, and on average, they have 90 percent occupancy throughout the year. A new online platform, *Turisabor*, highlights tourist routes including rural guest houses and traditional food production, thereby promoting gastronomy and increasing the sales of rural products.

Isabelle Durant, former Vice-president of the European Parliament and Deputy Prime Minister, Belgium

- The role of rural development in the globalised world, our connections with the land, the relationship between producer and consumer, the ecological impact of agriculture, the quality of nutrition, and the issues of short food systems and food security are topics of critical importance, which should be brought to the political arena and addressed by wider society.
- Rural women farmers should have access to all benefits and rights – not only women farmers but also those who work on a self-employed basis. Today, women farmers enjoy access to all social service provisions, just like others who work for themselves, including access to pensions, family benefits, medical assistance, disability subsidies and maternity benefits. This regulation is aimed at both women farmers, and those who work on a self-employed basis. In strategic terms, and despite the EU's recommendation to member states, the fact that this regulation is not solely reserved for rural women has been key to ensuring its adoption. In fact, within the countries in which farmers do not have significant political weight, it can be useful to widen the area covered during the lobbying process in order to succeed. This regulation also ensures women's access to the joint management of CAP subsidies, due to joint tenure rights, since the joint worker must also become the holder of the quotas and all administrative attributions. However, women's voices are not always heard.
- There are many obstacles to women's access to finance and entrepreneurship (including women themselves, who might not have enough confidence). These include household chores, looking after children and elderly members of the family, and problems in accessing the internet, transportation and social services. Within the available instruments of the European Union's Fund for Rural Development (FEADER), there is the Community Initiative for Rural Development (LEADER+) and the European Social Fund (ESF), both of which focus on the creation of better living and working conditions in rural areas and the improvement of women's access to information about services provided within these areas.
- One of the less visible barriers is social recognition. Women in rural areas are often "invisible". This happens because they are usually responsible for milking, feeding, and carrying out domestic work. Information is not always available to them, as they are often located at a distance from the places where this information is situated. Rural women need support, information and capacity development. Moreover, they are often underrepresented in decision-making bodies, such as agricultural cooperatives, unions and municipal administrations.
- Consequently, the agricultural system needs to come closer to women. At international level, there is an awareness that family farming is key to poverty reduction in rural areas. Yet family farming is, above all, placed on women's shoulders. The transformation of food systems needs to take place from local initiatives in which women are involved, and through rural women and the alliances that they weave in rural areas and beyond. This will enable the creation of more responsible ways of producing and consuming.

Taalaiug Isakunova, Minister of Labour and Social Development in the Kyrgyz Republic

- Rural women play an important role in the economy of the country, but their contribution is usually underappreciated. Over the last 20 years, women's status in Kyrgyzstan has deteriorated. Rural salaries are only 70 percent of the average wage and in some parts of the south, up to 70 percent of women suffer from anaemia. Rural infrastructure is not gender-sensitive, and many settlements do not have access to drinking water and other facilities. The quality of education is another important issue.

- Rural women's access to loans is also limited. Credit policy in the Kyrgyz Republic is gender-sensitive, but no research has been ever conducted on the impact of microcredits on rural women's health and wellbeing. Despite the good educational level of Kyrgyz women, and the availability of the Law on equal rights, only 16 percent of all members of the national parliament are women, and their representation has decreased over time.
- A national survey showed that the following six areas should be priorities for development: (1) economic growth, (2) employment, (3) effective governance, (4) education, (5) food security and (6) health care.
- FAO can become more actively involved in promoting gender equality agenda, because all stakeholders need to join efforts in light of the current rise in conservatism. Advocacy can be supported by concrete initiatives that target women in leadership and grassroots women.
- Another important area is related to malnutrition which is a significant issue with a strong gender dimension. Healthy diets are not common in rural areas, where households spend a large proportion of their restricted budgets on the excessive use of sugar. Despite the wide availability of vegetables and fruit, grown and exported by Kyrgyz farmers, the culture of food consumption by women, men and children requires change, primarily through working with women.

The presentations and discussions resulted in the following conclusions. Promoting and achieving socially inclusive rural development means addressing gender equality and empowering rural women. The deterioration of the socio-economic status of women living in rural areas in Europe and Central Asia can be addressed for achieving the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda by adopting a holistic and joint effort between multiple stakeholders from different sectors, including FAO, ministries of agriculture and other national and international stakeholders from different sectors. While a small NGO can make a significant impact on rural society, broader change requires that the voices of rural women are heard, and that policy and decision-makers are engaged in placing rural women at the top of the policy agenda. The discussions also pointed to the need to address the issues relating to access to resources, income and opportunities for women and men as a means for achieving both social justice and the 2030 Agenda. In particular, agricultural productivity will grow if women have the same access to opportunities and resources as men. For this, a proactive approach is needed, to ensure that women have the necessary leverage for their own empowerment.

Sharing experiences on inclusive agricultural and rural development policies in Europe and Central Asia: lessons learned and success factors

The conference provided an excellent opportunity for experts and practitioners from the gender community and from the ministries of agriculture to share experiences and promising practices. A review of country cases was at the centre of the conference agenda. Representatives of the Austrian, Spanish and Lithuanian governments showcased their practices in mainstreaming gender in agricultural and rural development policies, providing an opportunity for the participants to learn about new ways of creating inclusive policies.

In the case of Austria, the following factors contributed to their success:

- The inclusion of gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting in the Constitution of Austria as mandatory practice;
- the implementation of impact-oriented budgeting in national, local and sectoral policies; and
- the creation of a working group on gender mainstreaming in line ministries.

The national mechanism for gender equality includes, among other elements, a gender mainstreaming (GM) working group in each line ministry, based on a decision of the Council of Ministers adopted in 2002. In the case of the federal ministry of agriculture, forestry, environment and water management, the GM group consists of 16 members (12 women and 4 men) working in different departments and at different levels of the institutional hierarchy. The group meets four times a year, and works on the basis of an annual strategy, designing and implementing various projects and activities. Furthermore, gender mainstreaming is a mandatory part of the training curriculum for civil servants; and effective and gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation is part of the work of the ministry in ensuring accountability.

In Spain, following the adoption of a law on equality for women and men (2007), the Ministry of agriculture, fisheries, food and environment (MAPAMA) has worked on the basis of a ministerial plan to advance gender equality in rural areas. Two plans have been developed – one was implemented between 2011 and 2014, and the current one is in progress (2014–2018). The budget allocated by MAPAMA for the implementation of the current plan is EUR 1 million, and there is also additional funding to support rural women's associations.

Some of MAPAMA's key areas of action, which were highlighted at the session, include:

1. **Joint titling:** MAPAMA, in collaboration with other ministries and rural women's associations, drafted a law on the joint titling of agrarian holdings which was adopted in 2011. The purpose of the law is to recognize the property rights of women and men, married and non-married, who share the work in family agro-holdings and farms, to ensure equal rights in farm and holdings management and subsidies. This law has contributed to the professionalization of women's unpaid work in family farms and agro-holdings, increasing the visibility of their work, facilitating their participation in agrarian organizations and improving their access to social protection and its benefits.
2. **Subsidies to support rural women and rural women's associations:** MAPAMA provides subsidies to associations and institutions that work with rural women and help them to make their voice heard nationally. The budget for the last call for proposals was EUR 200 000 and six small rural associations have been granted awards. There are also seven major national associations that represent the interests of women in crop production, livestock and agro-food industries, including cooperatives. These associations are represented widely at national level, but also in European Union institutions and international organizations. Since 2005, these associations have received EUR 23 million for the development of different projects to support rural women. MAPAMA meets with associations of rural women twice yearly.

3. Excellence awards for innovation by rural women: These awards have been given annually since 2010, to promote innovative projects implemented by rural women. The focus of the awards includes: (i) excellence in agricultural activities that use new and sustainable technologies; (ii) excellence in economic activities in rural areas that develop new economic clusters or generate employment; and (iii) excellence in communication that increases the visibility of the innovative work of rural women.

These activities are combined with research, analysis and evaluation, ranging from assessments of gender issues in rural areas, to analysis of gender equality in public institutions. The list would not be complete without mentioning the support provided to publications, including coverage of gender issues in agricultural magazines, and conferences and seminars organized by MAPAMA.² In the magazine *Sustainable rural development*, MAPAMA has a section entitled, "Talking in feminine", in which reportage and interviews are published. Through the *National rural network*, MAPAMA also disseminates information that is of interest to rural women.

The conference participants also heard about the experience of the Federation of agrifood cooperatives of Spain, which, among other things, aims to increase the presence of women in the decision-making bodies of agrifood cooperatives and guiding councils, by providing them with training and coaching. This association of cooperatives benefits from the support of the government of Spain, as well as from other international forums and networks. The association focuses on seven core areas of work: (1) sensitization on gender equality, (2) dissemination of information on equal opportunities, (3) capacity development, (4) empowerment of rural women, (5) leadership and networking, (6) reconciliation of family and work life and (7) social responsibility. The agrifood cooperatives serve as a bridge to bring the voices of rural women and men to the national level through a network of representatives who are democratically elected. Organized structures and well-targeted support can help rural women to have a voice and representation at different levels of the administration, what is important in influencing decision-making at different political and administrative levels.

In Lithuania, the rural development programmes of 2007–2013 and 2014–2020 include specific provisions to ensure that women and men benefit equally from all interventions. Special emphasis is placed on ensuring that young farmers, both women and men, have equal opportunities and priority is given to women for start-ups in rural areas. The improvement of public infrastructure has also been prioritized and is approached in a gender-responsive manner, through the creation and improvement of day care facilities for children, crisis centres, primary health care points and craft centres, and the upgrading of broadband and local roads, among others.

The presenters from Austria, Spain and Lithuania all highlighted the importance of support from the European Union through the European agricultural fund for rural development (EAFRD), the LEADER+ programme and the European social fund (ESF). These forms of support aim to promote innovative actions in rural areas, with a strong focus on gender equality and gender-responsive implementation. Key components include: a compulsory participation quota of a minimum of 40 percent of either sex; sufficient budget allocation; positive discrimination to contribute to the closure of gender gaps; strict requirements on gender mainstreaming; and efficient monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure the accountability of the programmes.

In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, more than 50 percent of those working in agriculture in the region are women. Even though the law guarantees equal rights in land ownership, women's de facto enjoyment of their ownership rights over land, water and other natural resources and assets is limited. This in turn limits their access to credit and other economic opportunities. The share of women who own land can be as low as 10 percent, and as a result, in some countries of the region, less than 10 percent of registered farms are headed by women. Women are overrepresented in informal and unpaid labour, contributing to agriculture as "family workers". This limits their access to social benefits. In some countries of the region, only one in five women in rural areas has access to maternity allowance. Furthermore, domestic labour is more time consuming due to poorer infrastructure. Women's share of domestic work is sometimes more than three times that of their male counterparts, or of women living in urban areas. This significantly affects their quality of life, and constrains access to knowledge and information: only 10 percent of beneficiaries of extension services are women.

Gender mainstreaming in ministries of agriculture is part of a broader effort to promote gender justice in agriculture and rural development. Rural women's empowerment is not possible without access to decision-

making, whether at household, community or national level, and gender issues involve all spheres of economic and political life. In view of these issues, experience from Armenia, where the new Electoral Code has increased the quota for each gender on candidate lists from 20 to 25 percent, merits attention. Currently, women represent 5 percent of local council members, but it is expected that under the new system, their representation will increase to more than 36 percent of seats. In Ukraine, the opposite situation is occurring. Currently, women are better represented in governing institutions at local level, but due to decentralisation efforts leading to increased local budgets and decision-making powers, women's representation is expected to decrease. This is exacerbated by various challenges such as greater poverty levels, population ageing and a lack of access to social protection in rural areas. Another specificity of the current situation in Ukraine is the emergence of IDPs since the occupation and the need to create livelihood opportunities for this group.

The conference discussions pointed to the economic empowerment of rural women as key to socially inclusive rural development, which in practical terms means improving rural women's access to finance, entrepreneurship, specific agricultural knowledge and decision-making at different levels, among other factors. The social recognition of rural women – making visible their contribution to food security and the wellbeing of households and communities – was also mentioned in terms of requiring urgent attention. Participants highlighted issues relating to a lack of infrastructure and services, and access to drinking water, transport, and social services such as day care facilities. These remain acute challenges for the region because they affect women's time burden. Consequently, these issues need to be taken into account during the implementation of FAO interventions in the region. The case studies from Armenia, Austria, Lithuania and Spain also demonstrated the ways in which complex issues can be addressed, and while there is a need for national level support, FAO and ministries of agriculture can contribute to the process by supporting women leaders and providing every opportunity for rural women to develop their capacities, participate in learning and enhance their ability to self-organize.

Tools and approaches for promoting inclusive agricultural and rural development policies in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

FAO Regional office for Europe and Central Asia is fully committed to supporting member countries and national institutions as they develop and implement policies and programmes aimed at development that is sustainable but also equitable and inclusive. This means that as standard practice in all FAO technical work and activities, gender equality and the advancement of women are promoted at regional, sub-regional and national levels. FAO emphasizes that in order for gender mainstreaming to be successful, it is necessary to create an enabling policy environment. International law, beginning with the Human Rights Charter, is a starting point for advancing gender equality at all levels. Article 14 on the rights of rural women of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and recommendation 34 of the CEDAW committee, both provide a clear and detailed pathway and guidance for the empowerment of rural women. The SDG framework and the 2030 Agenda with its principle of “leaving no one behind” establish further clear goals; and FAO and countries of the region are committed to making a contribution to these goals. These frameworks are also useful tools when strategizing and planning.

Support for rural women is integral to inclusive development and requires specific interventions adapted to their needs. Achieving full and equal participation of women and men in social, political and economic life is a matter of social justice, of fundamental rights and the core pillar of sound development in rural areas.

One factor which contributes to the success of socially inclusive agriculture and rural development policies is the availability of well-designed tools that can assist policy-makers and practitioners in the ministries of agriculture and other institutions in integrating the concerns of disadvantaged groups into their policies, programmes and day-to-day work. There are a wide range of tools that have been developed by FAO and EIGE, and that are readily available for policy-makers and practitioners. They include, but are not limited to, e-learning courses, sector-specific guidelines, country gender assessments on agriculture and rural development, policy briefs, collections of good practices, and many others. In particular, conference participants were introduced to the EIGE (2017) *Gender impact assessment: Gender mainstreaming toolkit*, and the recently published FAO REU (2017b) guidelines, *Gender mainstreaming and a human rights-based approach: Guidelines for technical officers*. Additional tools recently developed by FAO (2016a; 2016b; 2017a) at global level include *Gender in agricultural policies analysis tool (GAPo)*; *Gender and rural advisory services assessment tool (GRAST)*; and *Developing capacities in gender-sensitive rural advisory services: A training of trainers manual*.

However, it was emphasised at the conference that it is not enough to produce the tools – they must be also be used in practice. For this, it is necessary to: allocate sufficient funds; be strategic and develop coherent implementation plans; mainstream gender in the administrative structures of governments; have strong accountability mechanisms; and above all, it is essential to have the political will and an enabling legal framework. In the absence of political commitment, and without the voices of rural women in the political arena, advancements are not possible.

In order to develop informed and well-targeted strategies, accurate and reliable statistics are needed, as what is not measured, cannot be targeted for improvement. In the case of Kazakhstan, gender statistics are available through the website of the state committee of statistics, and the regular publication *Women and men of Kazakhstan*. The UN is working in close partnership with the committee to improve the collection of data and develop gender-sensitive indicators for monitoring the SDGs.

Policies on agriculture and rural development need to provide greater support for rural women's entrepreneurship. Rural women's entrepreneurship means improved livelihoods and reduced poverty and food insecurity. The Government of Uzbekistan provides direct support for women's entrepreneurship and the Businesswomen's Association helps to raise the voice of members – there are currently 14 000 individual and collective members.

Among their activities to support entrepreneurship there are 70 local business trainers, professional training courses covering 14 different topics, the establishment of trading houses in Russia and Kazakhstan, and memorandum signing with banks to obtain low interest credits for women. The journal *Business Woman*, published in three languages, covers areas of interest for women entrepreneurs.

In Georgia, significant efforts have been made towards the creation of a national mechanism for gender equality and human rights. A team of four specialists, based at the Prime Minister's office and headed by Sopo Japaridze, lead this mechanism, which also includes a coordination group on the rights of women, a network of gender focal points at the different ministries and an interagency panel on the prevention of domestic violence. Challenges such as rural women's access to land and finance persist and need to be addressed in a comprehensive manner. In order to achieve this, the Government of Georgia collaborates with the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the ongoing implementation of article 14 of CEDAW.

One of the main challenges in Europe and Central Asia is that many decision-makers do not think that gender inequalities are an issue anymore. Some believe that gender equality has already been achieved, or even that there is too much equality. However, this is far from the reality, and gender inequalities continue to negatively affect both women and men. For example, the gap in life expectancy between men and women in Ukraine, Moldova and other countries differs by ten or more years, which is partly caused by gender-based behaviours. At the same time, women who live longer do not necessarily live fulfilled lives because poverty affects elderly women more severely than men. When the tools are available, the remaining action depends on the will of each of us to address these challenges.

Integrating gender concerns in selected technical areas under the SDGs framework: What needs to be done?

FAO's work on gender, which is a cross-cutting theme of FAO's strategic framework, is also framed by the *FAO Policy on gender equality*, endorsed in 2012. To deliver against the gender equality objectives, a set of minimum standards for gender mainstreaming were established that mirror those of the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP). UN-SWAP is a binding accountability framework that aims to facilitate the mainstreaming of gender into all institutional functions of the entities of the UN system.

Some of the minimum standards established by this policy are: equal participation in rural institutions and in shaping laws, policies and programmes; equal access to decent employment, income, land and productive resources; equal access to goods, services and markets; a 20 percent reduction in women's work burden; and 30 percent of agricultural aid serving the gender equality goals. Women's equal access to and enjoyment of their rights over land is one of the main focus areas for FAO in the context of the SDGs, particularly because FAO is the custodian of two indicators on gender and land, and has a key role in supporting the implementation of the *Voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security (VGGT)* and its *Technical guide on governing land for women and men* (FAO, 2012, 2013). Using this policy and strategy framework, FAO is delivering successful results on women's economic empowerment around the world.

The work of the organization in Europe and Central Asia is also guided by the *Regional gender equality strategy for Europe and Central Asia 2016–2017* which aims to: build knowledge around issues related to gender equality and rural development; strengthen the capacities of governmental institutions and other key stakeholders to formulate policies and programmes that are responsive to the needs of disadvantaged groups among the rural population; and improve women's economic opportunities and access to land and other resources.

According to the regional strategy, gender issues need to be considered throughout the whole policy and programming process, from the highest political level where policies are discussed to the grassroots level where they are implemented. FAO employs a twin-track approach involving both gender-specific actions and mainstreaming efforts in all policies on agriculture and rural development. This includes:

1. Ensuring that all FAO interventions are gender-responsive; and
2. implementing actions with a specific focus on gender statistics and rural women's economic empowerment.

However, these strategies and guiding principles do not suffice if there is no real commitment to their implementation. We must all reflect on how often we consider the needs of the most deprived and disadvantaged groups in our decision-making. Gender is not solely a matter for gender specialists: instead, it is necessary that all key staff involved in decision-making are aware of existing gender inequalities and consider the different needs of women and men from the beginning of the planning process.

The work of FAO in the region can be framed around two regional initiatives: (1) empowering smallholders and family farms for improved livelihoods and poverty reduction; and (2) agrifood trade and integration. Currently, a third regional initiative on sustainable agriculture and natural resource management in a changing climate is under consideration. The main drivers of this work include: (i) rural livelihoods, migration, and rural poverty; (ii) farm structure (23 percent of all landholders are women); (iii) sustainability of food production and food systems; (iv) food insecurity and malnutrition; and (v) agricultural markets and trade policy. All of these drivers have key gender issues, and the needs and situations of women and men need to be systematically considered and addressed.

With respect to the specific FAO interventions that target women's empowerment, the cases presented by Viorel Gutu, FAO Representative in Tajikistan, demonstrated the ways in which projects on honey and yak milk dairy production in remote, mountainous areas of Tajikistan effectively supported rural women and families, by helping them to generate more income in fighting poverty and food insecurity.

Examples of other FAO-supported interventions include: capacity building in collecting, analysing and disseminating gender statistics; the development of gender-sensitive extension services and gender-responsive programming and budgeting; and projects ranging from income diversification in Albania and Central Asia to supporting IDPs in Georgia and refugees in Turkey. Another key issue that was raised was the importance of both working with gender-specific projects and ensuring that all projects and interventions in agriculture and rural development are gender mainstreamed. Ultimately, the beneficiaries of all projects and interventions are both women and men, and there is no such thing as a gender-neutral project. Agricultural extension and rural advisory services are essential for the elimination of rural poverty and food insecurity and access to extension services can ensure that rural women have access to knowledge and information. However, women usually constitute only ten percent of clients. The main challenges for enhancing the gender-sensitivity of extension services are: (1) that women are not always perceived as farmers in their own right (but rather as wives of farmers); (2) rural women often face time and mobility constraints; (3) in some cases, they lack sufficient levels of literacy and education; and (4) rural women have limited voice and representation in decision-making, whether in their households or in rural communities. To address these challenges, service providers need to consider how they define their clients, levels of individual capacities on gender issues, organizational policies, content and mode of delivery, human resources and staffing, and how they engage with research and development. The results of FAO work in Turkey and Azerbaijan point to the need to create an enabling environment through adequate policy and legal frameworks, ensuring gender-sensitive organizational culture and practices and changing individual attitudes and capacities.

Conference participants had multiple opportunities for discussion and exchange of practices, including in the group work where they were asked to debate and reply to the following questions:

1. How are gender issues relevant to the three selected themes (detailed below) in order to meet the core principle of the 2030 Agenda of "leaving no one behind"?
2. What are the lessons learned and good practices aimed at addressing gender equality and women's empowerment in respective countries and institutions?

1. Increasing the resilience of rural livelihoods

Natural and human-made hazards have an impact on agriculture, food security and nutrition. FAO supports knowledge transfer and training to manage risks, and analyses the structural causes of the different crises for policy-making purposes. When prevention is not possible and the disaster happens, FAO must be prepared to manage an effective and quick response. In particular, it is necessary to be prepared for early action to assess the impact of the disaster and provide immediate support to protect and recover livelihoods. Promoting technologies and good practices among farmers, fishers, herders and foresters needs to be done before, during and after shocks. It is also important to adapt to climate change through good practices such as the use of flood- and drought-resistant crops, and preserving forests which shield against storms and halt land degradation. Preventive approaches include conservation agriculture, climate-smart agriculture, livelihood diversification, an ecosystems approach to fisheries and aquaculture, improved safety for fishers, seed security, financial services provision, land access and tenure, sustainable water management and diversifying family nutrition with new and existing food sources.

Activities that promote resilience and recovery tend to be more visible for men and less visible for women, but data on disasters from across the world indicate a gender dimension because women and girls tend to be disproportionately affected by crisis. Women and girls are also more exposed to the risks of sexual and gender-based violence in crisis response and recovery. There is the risk that gender equality and women's empowerment are set aside when it comes to needs and damage assessments. For example, in some countries, only those people who have holdings and land registered in their names are entitled

to the receipt of subsidies. This has a negative impact on women, especially in cases where spouses have migrated.

In order to be prepared for effective crisis response, it is necessary to strengthen institutional mechanisms, by:

- Enabling government institutions and equipping them with gender mainstreaming tools and methodologies that are articulated and agreed upon. This includes discussions on basic criteria for the selection of beneficiaries. It is also necessary to have a baseline that allows for an understanding of the dynamics that impact on the situation, and assessing the most effective ways to overcome these challenges.
- Involving multiple stakeholders that are representative of all groups of beneficiaries, and ensuring that women and girls are consulted with and involved when assessing damages and needs.

Some useful experiences come from:

- Armenia, where the National Emergency Commission established selection criteria to target female-headed households. Compensations are linked to conditions in order to ensure that they are used to generate work, so that rural populations remain in Armenia instead of migrating.
- Austria, where there is a network of women experts (WE4DRR) on gender in disaster risk reduction that works with the government.
- The Philippines, where information was shared with the affected populations, both women and men, and the response was designed according to their needs.
- Vietnam, where women were taught how to drive boats (usually done by men), which significantly reduced women's risks in the event of flooding.

The main suggestions that came from the conference participants were:

1. Ensuring that existing guidelines on disaster risk reduction are revised to be more gender-sensitive;
2. reviewing the lessons learned, for example in the case of the floods in Serbia; and
3. expanding existing networks to include experts from the region and learn from good practices.

2. Eliminating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition

Even though the level of undernourishment in countries of the region is below 5 percent, various forms of malnutrition still exist. Overweight and obesity prevail in 48 countries of the region and are on the rise. At the same time, child malnutrition is still a key issue. In order to eliminate malnutrition, it is necessary to focus on: increasing the nutrition sensitivity of food systems, ensuring healthy and high-quality diets for all income categories of population; enhancing access and empowering consumers to choose healthy diets; ensuring policy coherence across sectors for nutrition; and strengthening governance and accountability on nutrition policies. FAO works with governments on a range of issues including:

- Strengthening food security and nutrition governance and accountability
- Developing school nutrition programmes from a food system perspective
- Compiling local food composition databases
- Fostering crop diversification for healthy diets, including the promotion of rye and pulses
- Strengthening food safety systems

There are four pillars of food security, namely availability of food, access to food (including physical access and affordability), stability (availability and access all year round), and utilization (relevant food safety, preparation of nutritious meals, and adequate cooking and storage). In order to combat malnutrition, the

focus needs to be on the right quantity and quality of food, including food with low levels of contaminants, that is rich in diversity, and has the correct levels of fat, sugar and salt.

Given that domestic and caring responsibilities are still overwhelmingly placed over women's shoulders, it is not possible to consider the improvement of nutrition without considering women's roles. Other important aspects include: who has and transmits knowledge about nutrition and food consumption; where the cooking takes place and by whom; and who buys the food and makes decisions about what to buy and cook. Thus, in addressing the practical needs of women and the whole family (i.e. those needs that can improve women's situation within existent gender inequalities) it is necessary to improve women's knowledge about nutrition, safe food production and cooking, and improve their access to markets and diversified food. Women also have particular nutritional needs during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

However, it is also necessary to address strategic needs (by seeking change in society so that structural gender inequalities are challenged and real gender equality is reached). For this, it is important to ensure responsible fatherhood and the co-sharing of responsibilities in family nutrition. One example of good practice that was highlighted was in the municipality of Istanbul in Turkey, where mechanisms were put in place to promote nutritious food consumption. Additionally, in Uzbekistan, through the promotion of women's entrepreneurship there is strong support for home-based entrepreneurship to ensure food self-sufficiency, and priority is given to women through micro-credits.

3. Making agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable

FAO works to strengthen the capacities of national governments and institutions in the elaboration of strategies and national programmes for sustainable agriculture, forestry and fisheries, including climate change issues, by providing capacity development interventions and direct technical support. Some of the topics covered by FAO under this umbrella are the safe and minimal use of pesticides (through integrated pest management – IPM), issues relating to land degradation (including climate-smart agriculture, soil management practices and conservation agriculture, among others), the introduction of innovative technologies, including organic agriculture, and the prevention and control of trans-boundary plant and animal diseases, among others. FAO helps countries of the region to address the interlinked challenges of climate change and degraded natural resources through transitioning to sustainable agricultural and food systems that contribute to meeting national SDG targets and Paris Agreement commitments, with support from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environment Fund (GEF).

In order to increase agricultural productivity, it is necessary to ensure that both women and men have the same access to and ownership of resources. For this, gender sensitivity by policy-makers and implementers is needed. Conference delegates highlighted “gender focal points” as an example of good practice. This system, already implemented in some countries, involves gender focal points based within the ministries of agriculture who can coordinate with FAO and other UN agencies, and with gender focal points from other ministries and extension services. Moving forward, a gender network needs to be created, which can coordinate with the gender focal points of other countries to share good practices and lessons learned. These international exchanges of experience can also be promoted between women farmers themselves.

Officers designing and implementing policies also need to be aware of gender issues themselves, so that competencies and capacities on gender mainstreaming can be included in the terms of reference for employees. Simple and user-friendly guidance on gender mainstreaming can help in the work carried out by technical officers. The creation of a gender-sensitive family farming platform can improve women's access to knowledge, information, technology and agricultural inputs. Since gender inequalities are perpetuated through the process of socialization, gender-sensitivity needs to start in schools. It is not always necessary to implement large projects, because small FAO projects such as “tele-food” are equally effective and can be considered as a complementary option to other ongoing projects and interventions. Gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data are essential for the development of well-targeted and informed policies. Carrying out gender analysis of agricultural censuses is advised (as was conducted in Moldova), as well as the preparation of gender-specific forms of data collection, such as time-use surveys. This data collection also needs to be adapted to the 2030 Agenda.

Next steps

The conference provided an opportunity for FAO, EIGE and key stakeholders to raise and discuss a wide range of issues affecting the status of rural women in agriculture, rural development and food security policies. The main enabling factors for effective gender mainstreaming that were raised during the conference include: political will; enabling legislative and policy frameworks; sufficient gender budgeting; adequate gender mainstreaming capacity; the development and use of gender mainstreaming tools; the collection and use of gender statistics; adequate representation of rural women in decision-making at national, regional and local levels; and effective support to women's associations and cooperatives. Participants highlighted the importance of combining institutional gender mainstreaming with the implementation of projects to support rural women's entrepreneurship, including the provision of coaching on self-confidence and leadership, access to financial resources, land and agricultural inputs, and access to extension services, information, knowledge and information and communication technologies (ICTs). Participants of the conference and technical meetings held within its framework reviewed and discussed policy issues, as well as lessons learned and key success factors that have helped to achieve best practices in rural women's empowerment and socially inclusive rural development in the region. Through group work and discussions, participants assessed the relevance of these practices for their respective countries.

As a result of the work conducted at the conference, participants produced a joint call for action (JCA), a brief document that summarizes the key issues that were discussed and recommendations for the main areas of action for FAO, governments and civil society groups. The JCA was thoroughly reviewed by the participants of a session chaired by Marieta Okenkova, Permanent representative of the Slovak Republic to FAO, IFAD and WFP in Rome, and was adopted unanimously. The final version of the JCA can be found in Annex 2.

The conference was closed by Therese Murphy, Head of operations, EIGE, and Cristina Amaral, FAO Deputy representative for Europe and Central Asia.

During the closing remarks, it was emphasized that the 2030 Agenda is deeply rooted in human rights, especially its core principle of "leaving no one behind". Today, even in the wealthiest countries there are people who are left behind, and the challenges for Eastern European and Central Asian countries are similar to the challenges faced by the rest of the world. In order to address them, it is necessary that: women and men work together, from schools to the highest political levels; men are engaged to actively participate in this agenda; women are engaged as agents of change; data gaps are addressed; and efforts are better coordinated and well-resourced. Rural women need greater visibility, food security, modern infrastructure and access for all disadvantaged groups to services and resources. For this, a holistic approach is required at all levels. The conference has been an excellent opportunity to share experiences and learn from each other. The knowledge that has been generated and shared needs to be disseminated throughout the region, and stakeholders need to continue working together for gender equality.

More information on the conference is available at the event's website.³

3 The event website is available at <http://www.fao.org/europe/events/detail-events/en/c/461793/>.

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Annex 1 - Agenda

Agenda

Regional Conference

Promoting socially inclusive rural development in Europe and Central Asia:
Action for the 2030 Agenda

Vilnius, Lithuania
30 January – 01 February 2017

Agenda

Sunday, 29 January 2017	
All day	Arrival of participants (Artis Centrum Hotel)
19:00	Welcome of participants – Dinner buffet

CONFERENCE

Day I Monday, 30 January 2017		
<i>Session I: Opening ceremony</i>		
Chair: Cristina Amaral , FAO Deputy representative for Europe and Central Asia		
09:00 – 09:30	Opening	Welcoming remarks by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rolandas Taraskevicius, Vice-Minister of Agriculture, Republic of Lithuania • Cristina Amaral, Deputy Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia, FAO • Therese Murphy, Head of operations, European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) • Introduction of the agenda
<i>Session II: Defining socially inclusive agricultural and rural development policies for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals: What does it entail in practice?</i>		
Chair: Alia El-Yassir , Deputy Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia, UN Women		
09:30 – 09:55	Women and rural development: active policies	Keynote speaker: Carmen Quintanilla Barba , Parliamentarian and president, Confederation of Federations and Associations of Families and Women in Rural Areas (AFAMMER), Spain
09:55 – 10:20	Rural women: the challenge of the 21st century	Keynote speaker: Isabelle Durant , former Vice-president of the European Parliament and former Deputy Prime Minister, Belgium
10:20 – 10:40	Achieving the SDGs in Kyrgyzstan	Keynote speaker: Taalaigul Isakunova , Minister, Ministry of Labour and Social Development, Kyrgyz Republic
10:40 – 11:00	Q&A	
11:00 – 11:30	<i>Photo session and coffee break</i>	

<i>Session III: Sharing experiences on inclusive agricultural and rural development policies in Europe and Central Asia</i> Chair: Christian Veske , Stakeholders relations coordinator for EU member-states and international organizations, EIGE		
11:30 – 11:45	FAO and governments of the region: Working together for inclusive policies	Raimund Jehle , Regional strategic programme coordinator, FAO
11:45 – 13:00	Experiences from the region: country reviews	Presentations by country delegations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Astghik Mirzakhanyan, Head, Social Affairs Department, Prime Minister's Office, Armenia • Viorel Gutu, Representative to Tajikistan, FAO • Larysa Kobelyanska, Coordinator, Public council 'Equal Opportunities Caucus', Parliament of Ukraine
13:00 – 14:30	<i>Lunch</i>	
<i>Session IV: Lessons learned and success factors in implementing inclusive agricultural and rural development policies</i> Chair: Raimund Jehle , Regional strategic programme coordinator, FAO		
14:30 – 15:00	Addressing gender concerns in the EU	Barbara Limanowska , Senior gender mainstreaming officer, EIGE
15:00 – 15:30	Advancing rural women's economic empowerment: experience of Austria	Maria Baumgartner-Jurko , Head, Gender mainstreaming group, Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Austria
15:30 – 16:00	Relevant actions for women in rural development	Marta María Santos Martín , Deputy sub-director general of farm modernization, Ministry of agriculture and fisheries, food and environment, Spain
16:00 – 16:15	<i>Coffee break</i>	
16:15 – 16:45	Support greater opportunities for women under the Lithuanian Rural Development Programme	Vilma Daugaliene , Director, Department for Rural Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Republic of Lithuania
16:45 – 17:15	Gender and human rights based approach (Presentation of the Guidelines)	Yuriko Shoji , Sub-regional coordinator and FAO representative for Turkey and Uzbekistan, Sub-regional office for Central Asia, FAO
17:15 – 17:45	Conclusions and summary of Day I	Raimund Jehle , Regional strategic programme coordinator, FAO
19:00 – 21:00	<i>Conference dinner</i>	

TECHNICAL MEETINGS

Day II Tuesday, 31 January 2017		
<i>Session V: Tools and approaches for promoting inclusive agricultural and rural development policies in Eastern Europe and Central Asia</i> Chair: Barbara Limanowska , Senior gender mainstreaming officer, EIGE		
09:00 – 09:30	FAO's global programme for reaching gender equality in agriculture and rural development	Ilaria Sisto , Gender and development officer (Training and capacity enhancement), Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division, FAO
09:30 – 10:00	FAO's regional experience: Strategies and data needs for addressing the SDGs and gender in agriculture, rural development and food security in the region	Dono Abdurazakova , Senior advisor in gender and social protection, FAO Regional office for Europe and Central Asia
10:00 – 10:30	Data availability and gaps in monitoring the SDGs at country level: the case of Kazakhstan	Sholpan Iskakova , Chief specialist, Division of Social and Demographic Data, Committee of Statistics, Ministry of Economic Development, Kazakhstan
10:30 – 11:00	Promoting inclusive development to achieve the SDGs and gender equality: the case of Uzbekistan	Gulnora Makhmudova , Chair, Business Women Association, Uzbekistan
11:00 – 11:15	<i>Coffee break</i>	

<i>Session VI: Challenges and opportunities for integrating gender concerns in selected technical areas of work under the SDGs framework</i>		
Chair: Ilaria Sisto , Gender and development officer (Training and capacity enhancement), FAO		
11:15 – 12:00	Presentation of technical areas of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gerold Boedeker, Field programme officer, FAO • Eleonora Dupouy, Food safety and consumer protection officer, FAO • Avetik Nersisyan, Agricultural officer, FAO
12:00 – 13:00	Group work: Addressing the challenges and identifying solutions for achieving inclusive SDGs Theme 1: Eliminating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition Theme 2: Making agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable Theme 3: Increasing the resilience of rural livelihoods	
13:00 – 14:30	<i>Lunch</i>	
<i>Session VII: Promoting gender equality and inclusive interventions in the field</i>		
Chair: Dorjee Kinlay , FAO Representative, Kyrgyz Republic		
14:30 – 15:00	The role of cooperatives in supporting rural women's economic empowerment	Jerónima Bonafe Ramis , President, section of Balearic Islands, Agrifood cooperatives, Spain
15:00 – 15:30	The role of financial inclusion in food security and rural women's empowerment	Sophio Japaridze , Advisor, The Prime- Minister's Office, Georgia
15:30 – 16:00	Access to knowledge and information (a case study of improving access to extension services)	Hajnalka Petrics , Gender and development officer, FAO
16:00 – 16:15	<i>Coffee break</i>	
<i>Session VIII: What needs to be done?</i>		
Chair: Melek Cakmak , Representative to Azerbaijan, FAO		
16:15 – 17:15	Continuation of group work: Addressing the challenges and identifying solutions for achieving inclusive SDGs Theme 1: Eliminating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition Theme 2: Making agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable Theme 3: Increasing the resilience of rural livelihoods	
17:15 – 17:45	Feedback and moderated discussion of the findings from the group work	
17:45 – 18:00	Conclusions and summary of Day II	Raimund Jehle , Regional strategic programme coordinator, FAO
Day III Wednesday, 01 February 2017		
<i>Session IX: Defining the next steps</i>		
Chair: Marieta Okenkova , Permanent representative of the Slovak Republic to FAO, IFAD and WFP		
09:00 – 09:30	Summary of the past two days and presentation of the Joint Call for Action	
09:30 – 11:00	Discussion of the Joint Call for Action in plenary	
11:00 – 11:15	<i>Coffee break</i>	
11:15 – 11:45	Continuation of the discussion of the Joint Call for Action in plenary and validation	
11:45 – 12:30	Closing remarks from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therese Murphy, Head of operations of EIGE • Cristina Amaral, Deputy Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia 	
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Working lunch – Networking</i>	
Afternoon	<i>Departure of participants</i>	

Annex 2 - Joint call for action

Regional Conference

**Promoting socially inclusive rural development in
Europe and Central Asia:
Action for the 2030 Agenda**

Vilnius, Lithuania

30 January – 01 February 2017

Joint call for action



Promoting socially inclusive rural development in Europe and Central Asia: Action for the 2030 Agenda

Vilnius, Lithuania

30 January – 01 February 2017

We, the participants of the above conference:

Reaffirm the commitment to promote and work in partnership towards gender equality and women's empowerment both as a stand alone goal and as an absolute precondition for achieving all of the Sustainable Development Goals;

Reiterate that rural poverty, social exclusion, food insecurity, malnutrition, the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work and economic disparities are closely associated with gender inequalities in rural communities, which in turn generate more poverty;

Recognize the contribution of rural communities (including rural women) to economic growth;

Acknowledge that there are challenges faced by rural women and men – identified in the FAO Regional strategy for gender equality in Europe and Central Asia – that still need to be addressed and overcome in order to effectively eradicate rural poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition, and that there are still many areas in which further attention is required in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda;

Emphasize the need for a political will and transformative approach to address the deep-rooted, structural barriers that perpetuate gender inequalities in rural and agricultural development;

Note with appreciation and welcome the many efforts made and promising practices developed at local and national levels across the region.

Call for action:

For FAO Regional office for Europe and Central Asia:

1. Continue to actively support member states to achieve the SDGs in a socially inclusive manner, by formulating evidence-based and gender-responsive policies and programmes in order to achieve sustainable agriculture and food security, and to ensure equal access to and control over natural and productive resources, infrastructure, services, markets, technology, decent work and social protection;
2. Build knowledge and competencies in issues pertaining to gender equality and women's empowerment to support rural and agricultural development in the region, by providing support in producing, analysing and disseminating gender-sensitive and sex-disaggregated data, and raising gender awareness among ministries of agriculture and other national stakeholders, including the agencies responsible for formulating and implementing rural development policies and women and men living in rural communities;
3. Ensure that in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all programmes and projects, their impact on socially deprived and disadvantaged groups, and primarily rural women and men, is adequately taken into account;

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4. Engage more actively to address the strategic needs of rural women and girls, increasing their access to resources and economic empowerment through learning, training and income diversification;
5. Ensure the greater visibility and recognition of rural women by (1) establishing an annual award to be given to a prominent rural woman on the International Day of Rural Women, celebrated on 15 October; (2) inviting a group of indigenous rural women farmers from the most economically deprived and remote areas in the region to the European Regional Conference; (3) issuing a letter of appreciation to, or nominating as a champion, a national institution or organization (governmental or non-governmental) that has achieved outstanding results in advancing the gender equality agenda in its work;
6. Work in partnership with relevant regional and international stakeholders, including those within the UN system, in support of results at national level.

For governments and other national institutions:

1. Formulate national policies and strategies for agriculture and rural development, including food security, nutrition and sound rural and agricultural development, that are inclusive and gender-responsive, and introduce accountability mechanisms to make sure that they are implemented;
2. Establish and strengthen inclusive governance mechanisms and increase rural women's representation and leadership in governing institutions at all levels, including women's organizations, networks and movements, and raise women's capacity in rural development-related policies and programmes so that they can meaningfully participate in decision-making and in shaping laws, policies and programmes;
3. Formulate and implement equal opportunities policies and programmes for gender equality and the empowerment of women, targeting particularly rural women and financing the implementation of these programmes, to provide rural women with increased access to agricultural knowledge and financial services;
4. Support programmes aimed at rural women's economic empowerment, by improving their entrepreneurship skills, access to financing and markets, agricultural knowledge and education (including tertiary education), creating decent jobs, and overcoming the existing pay gap between women and men;
5. Design and implement transformative social protection policies and measures, and invest in rural infrastructure that specifically targets rural women, including policies and programmes to ensure that unpaid care work is recognized, reduced and reorganized through investment in both rural physical infrastructure and the social infrastructure of care;
6. Address the underlying structural causes of gender inequality in legal and institutional frameworks and ensure that national budgets are gender-responsive;
7. Support the collection and dissemination of information on successful good practices that advance gender equality and the empowerment of rural women.

For civil society groups, associations and the private sector:

1. Specifically target rural women and young women from disadvantaged groups to engage in economic activities;
2. Ensure decent working conditions for women, and equal pay for equal work;
3. Assist rural women in gaining access to a range of resources and agricultural inputs, including material (land, water, finance, equipment, seeds) and non-material ones (ICT, knowledge, technology, skills);

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4. Ensure women and girls are de facto engaged in training and other learning activities which result in their economic empowerment;
5. Develop specific programmes for young women and men to ensure their access to income generation opportunities in rural areas;
6. Facilitate rural women's access to social protection benefits;
7. Raise gender awareness among policy and decision-makers to increase their commitment to gender-responsive policies and investments;
8. Work with men to overcome stereotypes and balance the gender division of labour.

Annex 3 – List of participants

Regional Conference: Promoting socially inclusive rural development In Europe and Central Asia: Action for Agenda 2030

Vilnius, Lithuania
30 January – 01 February 2017

List of Participants

Participants – host country:

Nr	Name	Position	Institution
1	Rolandas Taraskevičius	Vice-Minister	Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania
2	Snieguole Andruskaite Mikaliuniene	Chief officer	International relations division
3	Vilma Daugaliene	Director	Rural development department, Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania
4	Jekaterina Dmitrijeva	Deputy Director	Department for European Union and international matters
5	Ilona Javiciene	Chief officer	Rural development department
6	Ana Stankaitiene	Director	Economic Progress Department, Office for the Government

Nr	Name	Position	Institution
Albania			
7	Roni Telegrafi ¹	Deputy minister	Ministry of Agriculture, rural development and water administration (MARDWA)
Armenia			
8	Astghik Mirzakhanyan	Head of the social affairs department	Social affairs department, Prime minister's office, Government of Armenia
9	Gayane Nasoyan	Assistant FAO representative	FAO Armenia
Austria			
10	Maria Baumgartner-Jurko	Chairperson of the working group on gender mainstreaming	Federal Ministry of agriculture, forestry, environment and water management
11	Theresia Oedl-Wieser	Researcher and Director	Federal Institute for less favoured and mountainous areas, and Austrian Association for Agricultural Economics
Azerbaijan			
12	Rashad Dayiyev	Deputy director	Department of economic and social sectors
13	Melek Cakmak	FAO Representative	FAO Azerbaijan
Belarus			
14	Vasilina Akhramovich	National correspondent	FAO Belarus
Belgium			
15	Isabelle Durant	Former Vice-president of the European Parliament; Deputy Prime Minister of Belgium	ECOLO
Georgia			
16	Sophio Japaridze	Advisor of the Prime Minister of Georgia on Human Rights and gender equality issues	Prime Minister's office
17	Mamuka Meskhi	Assistant FAO Representative	FAO Georgia
Kazakhstan			
18	Sholpan Iskakova	Chief statistician	Committee of Statistics, Ministry of Economy
Kyrgyzstan			
19	Taalaikul Isakunova	Minister	Ministry of labour and social development
20	Dorjee Kinlay	FAO Representative	FAO Kyrgyzstan

¹ Albania could not participate to the event, but has formally subscribed its commitment to the Joint Call for Action

Kosovo²			
21	Kapllan Hallimi	General secretary	Ministry of agriculture, forestry and rural development in Kosovo
22	Ekrem Gjokaj	Head	Department of economic analysis and agriculture statistics, Ministry of agriculture, forestry and rural development
23	Naser Krasniqi	FAO team leader	FAO Kosovo
Montenegro			
24	Darko Konjevic	Director general	Directorate for rural development Ministry of agriculture and rural development (MARD)
Republic of Moldova			
25	Veaceslav Cernat	Secretary of state	Ministry of agriculture and food industry
26	Tudor Robu	Assistant FAO Representative	FAO Moldova
Republic of Serbia			
27	Helga Stojavnovic	Head	Project Unite, Ministry of agriculture and environmental protection
28	Ljuba Ivanovic	National correspondent	FAO Serbia
Slovakia			
29	Marieta Okenkova	Permanent representative of the Slovak Republic to FAO and WFP	Permanent representation of the Slovak Republic to FAO and WFP
Spain			
30	Jerónima Bonafe Ramis	President	Agri-food cooperatives of Spain
31	Carmen Quintanilla Barba	Parliamentarian and President	Confederation of federations and associations of families and women from rural areas (AFAMMER)
32	Rita Mateos Robles	Secretary general	Confederation of federations and associations of families and women from rural areas (AFAMMER)
33	Marta María Santos Martín	Deputy sub-director general	Sub-directorate general for farm modernization; General directorate for rural development and forestry policies; Ministry of agriculture and fisheries, food and environment
Tajikistan			
34	Kamoliddin Qurbonov	Head	Department for international relations, Ministry of agriculture
35	Viorel Gutu	FAO Representative	FAO
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia			
36	Ana Damovska	Project Team Leader	USAID – Adaptation to climate change in agriculture, Rural development network of the Republic of Macedonia
37	Lidija Chadikovska	National correspondent	FAO

² References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

Turkey			
38	Muhammed Adak	Deputy General director	General directorate of agricultural reform, Ministry of food, agriculture and livestock
39	Ahmet Ipek	Deputy General director	General directorate of forestry
40	Ümit Turhan	Chief of Branch	General directorate of forestry
41	Yuriko Shoji	FAO Sub-regional coordinator and FAO Representative (Turkey, Uzbekistan)	SEC – FAO Turkey
Ukraine			
42	Larysa Kobelyanska	Coordinator	Public council “equal opportunities caucus” under the Parliament of Ukraine
Uzbekistan			
43	Gulnora Makhmudova	Head	Business women association
44	Nodirakhon Tursunova	Chief expert	Ministry of agriculture and water resources of Uzbekistan
45	Alisher Shukurov	AFAOR	FAO

EIGE:

Nr	Name	Position
46	Therese Murphy	Head of operations
47	Barbara Limanowska	Senior gender mainstreaming officer
48	Helena Morais Maceira	Researcher – gender mainstreaming
49	Christian Veske	Stakeholders relations coordinator for EU member states and international organizations

UN Women:

Nr	Name	Position
50	Alia El-Yassir	Deputy Regional Director; UN Women Regional office for Europe and Central Asia

FAO:

Nr	Name	Position
51	Cristina Amaral	FAO Deputy Regional representative
52	Raimund Jehle	FAO Regional strategic programmes coordinator, FAO Representative (Albania, Georgia, Armenia, Moldova)
53	Dono Abdurazakova	Senior adviser in gender and social protection
54	Sheikh Ahaduzzaman	Programme officer, gender focal point
55	Gerold Boedeker	Field programme officer

56	Eleonora Dupouy	Food safety and consumer protection officer
57	Pavel Kiparisov	Research assistant – rapporteur
58	Avetik Nersisyan	Agricultural officer
59	Hajnalka Petrics	Gender and development officer
60	Lea Plantek	Liaison and communication junior technical officer
61	Aroa Santiago Bautista	Gender mainstreaming specialist
62	Ilaria Sisto	Gender and development officer (training and capacity enhancement)

