



FORUM ON WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Concept note

BACKGROUND

At its 42nd session, CFS endorsed the 2016-2017 Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) which included a *Forum on Women's empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition*:

Excerpt from CFS 2015/42/12 - CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work 2016-2017 (Paras 30-31)

According to the State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) released by FAO in 2010-2011, despite their crucial role in agriculture, women still "face gender-specific constraints that reduce their productivity and limit their contributions to agricultural production, economic growth and the well-being of their families, communities and countries". These result in a gender gap in terms of access to land and essential resources. According to FAO, if women were given the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30 percent and raise agricultural outputs in developing countries by 2.5-4 percent which in theory could reduce the overall number of hungry people by 12-17 percent (SOFA 2010-2011, Women in Agriculture). Closing the gender gap and addressing women's nutritional challenges would have positive implications also on children's nutritional status given that when women have more influence over economic decisions, their families allocate more income to food, health, education, children's clothing and children's nutrition.

A CFS Forum will take place during or back-to-back to CFS 44 in October 2017 to discuss the challenges that remain in economic empowerment of women and help promote a shared understanding of how those issues are evolving in the agriculture and agri-food sector. Taking into account also the recommendations of the policy roundtable on "Gender, Food Security and Nutrition" held at CFS 37 in 2011, the discussion is expected to lead to identification of policy gaps and good practices which can be broadly disseminated with a view to informing future gender-sensitive policy and represent the basis for future stocktaking and sharing of lessons.

This concept note has been developed on the basis of the inputs provided by the Bureau and Advisory Group in their November-December 2016 and February 2017 meetings, as well as through the contributions of the Technical Task Team (TTT) on Women's Empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition set up to support the CFS Secretariat in the preparation of the Forum.

OBJECTIVES

In line with the guidance provided in the CFS MYPoW 2016-17, the Forum will promote a shared understanding of how issues related to women's economic empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition are evolving. The Forum will also contribute to promoting mutual accountability towards the full realization of women's rights, achieving gender equality and women's empowerment for the attainment of all Sustainable Development Goals - especially SDG1, SDG2, SDG5, SDG8 and

SDG17 - and strengthening synergies among these goals in policy and programme frameworks for countries.

Specifically, the Forum's objectives will be:

- 1) **Identifying and raising awareness** on emerging challenges and persisting barriers to women's economic empowerment and on legal and policy instruments to overcome them (including ILO Convention 100, the Convention on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and new policy instruments like CEDAW General Recommendation No. 34 on the rights of rural women);
- 2) **Sharing experiences and good practices** on the implementation of existing legal and policy frameworks, strategies and approaches, as well as practical initiatives, that address the gender gaps in the agriculture/agri-food sector and thereby contribute to women's economic empowerment (including challenges in addressing the gender data gap);
- 3) **Identifying ways in which the CFS can contribute to accelerating progress towards women's economic empowerment, leading to improved food security and nutrition for all persons.**

EXPECTED RESULTS

The Forum is expected to inform future gender-transformative policy (including CFS products and policy recommendations) and will represent the basis for future stocktaking, sharing of lessons and reflecting on persistent and emerging challenges, as well as successful strategies for empowering women economically.

Specifically, taking into account also the recommendations of the policy roundtable on "Gender, Food Security and Nutrition" held at CFS 37 in 2011 among others, the Forum is expected to lead to the identification of:

- Challenges, gaps and barriers that hinder progress in women's economic empowerment and the achievement of gender equality;
- Experiences and good practices on the implementation of existing legal and policy frameworks, strategies and approaches, as well as practical initiatives, that address the gender gaps in the agriculture/agri-food sector and thereby contribute to women's economic empowerment;
- Next steps for CFS to advance women's economic empowerment, women's rights and gender equality in the context of food security and nutrition. In particular how the outcome of the Forum will be incorporated in the development of future CFS policy, taking into account that women's empowerment and gender equality are prerequisites for food and nutrition security for all persons.

The Forum will also contribute to:

- increased knowledge on the use and application of existing legal and policy frameworks with relevance to the women's economic empowerment and food security and nutrition nexus;
- Increased awareness on legal and policy instruments to achieving women's empowerment and gender equality through food security and nutrition;

- Increased knowledge on the linkages between women, the agriculture/agri-food sector and nutrition.

TIMING AND FORMAT

A one-day Forum will be held in September 2017 (date to be announced). The Forum's conclusions and recommendations will be captured in a Chair's Summary to be presented at CFS 44 for endorsement. Discussion of this item at CFS 44 will also include a key note speaker to ensure high visibility on this topic during Plenary week.

PROPOSED PROCESS

The Forum's preparations will be under the overall purview of the CFS Bureau and Advisory Group. To this end, a standing item will be included in the agenda of the Bureau and Advisory Group meetings during the 2016-2017 inter-sessional period.

The approach and outcome for the Forum will be discussed at the Joint Bureau and Advisory Group meeting on 6 February and decided upon by the Bureau on 10 February.

Between February and March, drawing from their organizations' respective expertise and professional networks, TTT members will be sharing and reviewing experiences and good practices as the basis for the preparation of the background document.

By 15 April 2017 - The TTT will support the CFS Secretariat in preparing:

- 1) an annotated outline of the background document, including a summary of the selected case studies.

The background document to the Forum will include:

- i) a review of the existing policy and legal frameworks with high relevance to women's economic empowerment and achieving gender equality in the context of the agriculture and agri-food sector;
- ii) an overview of the policy gaps, persisting barriers and emerging challenges to women's economic empowerment and gender equality;
- iii) a compendium of experiences and good practices on the implementation of existing legal and policy frameworks, strategies and approaches, as well as practical initiatives, that address the gender gaps in the agriculture/agri-food sector and thereby contribute to women's economic empowerment;
- iv) a synthesis of the findings.

- 2) the agenda and format of the Forum;

- 3) a list of proposed panelists.

The above material will be discussed in the 3 May Joint Bureau and Advisory Group meeting and decided upon in the 8 May Bureau meeting.

Between May and June the Secretariat will be inviting panelists and finalize the Forum's agenda.

By 23 June the Technical Task Team will submit the background document to the CFS Secretariat

The background document to the Forum will be circulated for feedback and discussed during the 11 July joint Bureau and Advisory Group meeting and 14 July Bureau meeting.