### Side Event Title:

*Celebrating the international day of rural women. From the field to the CFS and back. Experiences, demands and perspectives from rural women’s grassroots organizations*

### Key speakers/presenters:

- Hilal Elver, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food
- Azra Sayeed, International Women’s Alliance (IWA), Pakistan
- Iridiani Seibert, La Via Campesina (LVC), Brazil
- Christiana Louwa, World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), Kenya
- Paulomee Mistry, International Union of Food-workers (IUF), India
- María Teresa Álvarez, World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples (WAMIP), Argentina
- Ruchi Tripathi, ActionAid International (Moderator)

### Summary (Total 500 words maximum) - Please use the sub-headings

**Main themes/issues discussed**

- Experiences and challenges faced by rural women, in particular agricultural and food workers, fisherfolks, pastoralists and smallholders farmers
- Major issues and violations affecting rural women;
- The inter-linkage between the respect, fulfilment and recognition of women’s rights and the achievement of the 2030 agenda;
- Demands and perspectives from rural women’s grassroots organisations to overcome the challenges and violations;
- International normative frameworks in place to support rural women’s demand and the fundamental need of their use, application and monitoring at national, regional and global level.

**Summary of key points**

- Rural women have multiple identities and they experience life accordingly. They are pastoralists, fisherfolks, farmers, agricultural and food workers, consumers, Indigenous Peoples, youth, landless, urban food insecure and fisherfolks. When talking about Rural Women we are therefore aware that this term embeds heterogenous identities and intersectionalities.
- Rural women do productive and reproductive work. Both dimension of these works are often invisible and not recognized. These areas of invisibility foster the impunity and practice of gender-based violence and discrimination;
• The International day of Rural Women should be an opportunity for action, not only a symbolic day in the calendar. Especially on this day, women should naturally be granted a space to speak out loud in the CFS and other institutions and fora;

• The endorsement of the resolution adopting the Peasants’ Rights declaration by the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva represents a huge victory in the framework of human rights enhancement, and it is a golden opportunity to further strengthening rights of women working in agriculture and rural areas. Nevertheless, there is still a long path ahead to ensure the final adoption, use and application of this instrument;

• It is essential to address the violence to which women are subjected within a human rights framework. It is not possible to achieve CFS vision without achieving women’s rights and gender equality.

• Women continue to be subjected to major violations of their rights in the rural areas: i.e. 80% workforce in tea plantations in India are composed by women. Notwithstanding, they are continuously subjected to violations, malnourishment and limited access to public assistance and I services;

• After 10 years of celebration of the International Day of Rural Women, the same demands continue to be unmet. Women do not enjoy the same rights as men in working places, and continue to remain invisible and subjected to sexual harassment, exclusion and marginalization;

• When talking about women’s rights, the observed gender gaps are several: there is the urban and rural gap; the gap between developed and developing countries; the gap in wages; gaps in decision making roles, and many more. Moreover, considering that the CEDAW is 39 years old, another major gap it is clearly the one between existing law and normative frameworks and their effective implementation. In this sense the commitment of governments is fundamental to use and apply such instruments in order to ensure women’s rights on the ground;

• Women are not only able to critically analyse and highlight challenges, grassroots women’s organizations are also able to promote and practice concrete alternatives that can lead to structural and significant changes in the production and consumption patterns and paradigms.

• Agroecology represents an opportunity to reach a different way of food production which is productive, sustainable, respectful of natural resources and traditional knowledge. Women have been making a substantial contribution to agroecology, ensuring that this practice has at its core a feminist perspective.

• Women’s control over, and access to land, seeds, water is fundamental. Their role in policy decision making processes is also key.

### Key take away messages

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<td>• Need of consolidating the participatory role of women in CFS and in other decision making processes at any level, from the local to the global one;</td>
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<td>• International Day of Rural women need to have a predominant role during CFS Plenary week by ensuring that rural women voices are heard and put at the center of this global body;</td>
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<td>• There is no way to achieve the Right to Food without the full recognition, respect and fulfillment of women’s rights;</td>
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<td>• Need to ensure the use, application and monitoring of already existing legal frameworks for the women’s rights protection. Normative and political frameworks require concrete actions. (i.e.</td>
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implement ILO conventions of agricultural and food workers, GR 34 of CEDAW, Right to Food Guidelines);

• The UN Declaration of Peasants Rights endorsed in Geneva can be a major tool to strengthen the position of rural women in agriculture and rural areas;

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