



**Report of the Meeting**  
**of the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders in Agriculture**  
**15 November 2009**  
**Queen Juliana Room in the FAO Building (Rome, Italy)**



Prepared by Rosalud de la Rosa, WOCAN

## **Background**

At this crucial time of institutional reform and resource allocation, the agriculture sector must afford women producers recognition and value as primary food producers and environmental managers. Transforming agriculture institutions, structures and programmes to focus on women producers requires collective action among strong and influential women leaders who listen to the voices of women most affected by the food and climate change crises. Organizations of women producers, supporting partners, and professional women are all needed to allow these collective efforts to be realized.

The Network of Women Ministers and Leaders in Agriculture is an example of such collective action. Facilitated by WOCAN with support from IFAD and Heifer International, the launch of this Network during the Commission for Sustainable Development in 2008 was attended by women ministers and their staff from several countries, as well as women leaders from farmers' organizations and other civil society and international organizations. The Ministers of Agriculture of the Netherlands and South Africa played active roles to promote the Network and the women major group platform on women farmers and rural women. The outcome document of CSD 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Sessions already provide a good basis for a concrete plan for implementation for the Network members.

There are currently 18 women Ministers of Agriculture around the world, in Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia, Chile, Denmark, European Commission, Finland, Germany, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, the Netherlands, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland and Uganda. These Ministers have the potential to improve the responsiveness of national and global policies to the needs of poor rural women, who make up the majority of the world's farmers in many regions. For example, Mona Brother, Senior Advisor/Ambassador, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Norway credited Norway's 'best practices' to the existence of a female Minister of Agriculture for eleven years and when CSD was chaired by a woman minister of agriculture, *Minister Verburg of the Netherlands*, it culminated in an unprecedented focus on women farmers as key actors in the agriculture sector.

The Network emphasizes the importance of champions for women's issues in agriculture, fisheries, forestry and livestock. In this regard, a special Brunch Event was organized by WOCAN prior to the World Summit on Food Security (November, 2009), held at the FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy.

The Network's event intended to provide a space for a constructive exchange and dialogue between high level women ministers and leaders and grassroots rural women, including representatives of women's constituencies that deliberated during the CSO Forum. The outcome and key messages of this meeting were then brought to the attention of the Summit participants.

## **Highlights of the Meeting**

### **Welcome Remarks**

*Ambassador Ertharin Cousin* welcomed the participants to this meeting. Her Excellency highlighted several challenges faced by the more than one billion hungry and undernourished people worldwide, including climate change, the global financial crisis, and high oil prices, among others. She also noted that this unacceptable situation of food insecurity, hunger and undernourishment will further lead to tension, conflict and eventually violence. As primary producers of world's food, women are a key to the solutions of hungry households. Yet despite the fact that women are the majority of smallholder farmers, they are still

left out of agriculture and development plans and policies. The United States Plan and Strategy for Food Security, under the leadership of Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, clearly states and integrates gender. She therefore recommended for other countries to consider the specific inclusion of and investment on women when developing country-led national food security policies and strategies, citing several key elements (please see Annex 2 for a full transcript of Ambassador Cousin's statement).

Her Excellency also shared a particularly striking reflection on a recent event she had just attended. During a Pre-Summit Event on the Private Sector, with significant representation from small-holder farmer's associations from India, Africa and the Caribbean, Her Excellency noted the lack of women's perspective in the event in addition to a conspicuous absence of acknowledgement of the role of women during the policy discussion panel. While appreciating how private sectors are stepping up to their role in the global partnerships of agriculture, Ambassador Cousin asked the all-men panelists the issue about women. With responses received from the panelist on the important role of women, she was struck by the comment of a representative of a small-holder farmer's association from Africa. This person stated that *while he understood that women have an important role to play in agriculture, in his country, women still had to prove that they deserve to sit on the negotiating table*. Ambassador Cousin highlighted that such statements (particularly in such global fora) highlight the real challenges we face, and leaders must see the need to help women in farmer organizations to empower themselves.

Ambassador Cousin thanked the participants for their leadership and expressed her commitment to this role as a woman champion, together with many other women Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives to Rome-based agencies .

*Eve Crowley*, Officer-in-Charge of the FAO's Gender Equity and Rural Employment Division, thanked the Ambassador for her heartwarming and challenging remarks. She acknowledged the presence of women in the room representing governments, UN agencies and rural women's groups and civil society organizations, and especially the group of women who, within just several few weeks, mobilized rural women in 21 countries to document their voices and key messages to put forward to the leaders attending the Summit. Eve noted that there is no single platform for rural women's voices to be heard, and that women remain disproportionate members and leaders of farmer's organization. Eve acknowledged the many untold stories behind what will be discussed during the Summit in the days that followed. She asked: "How can we work together to remove that 'invisibility' of women?" The good news is that the Summit Declaration commits integrating actions, addressing policies and capacity of institutions with emphasis on smallholder and women farmers, as well as their access to technology, credit, inputs, etc. While those present in this meeting may be a tip of the iceberg, it still has a critical role to play in breaking the silence in the future. Women leaders must prepare for the upcoming Beijing +15 and the ECOSOC discussions on rural women. We need to ensure that rural women's voices are heard in agriculture and rural policy fora, as well as relevant women's forum. We have done things the other way during the last two decades. She asked, "Is it not the time to do it differently this time?"

*Jeannette Gurung*, Director of WOCAN, facilitated the session and invited introduction of participants (please see Annex 1 for a list of participants). Søren Skafte, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Denmark, expressed the regrets of the Head of the Delegation of Denmark who would have been glad to join the meeting but unable due to a late arrival. Jeannette also mentioned the regrets sent by other

women ministers of Agriculture, specifically from Bolivia, Comoros, the Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland and Uganda, as well as from Permanent Representation from United Kingdom, Norway, and Cape Verde. She mentioned the absence of two other women farmers who were invited by WOCAN but unable to attend due to security requirements in the FAO Building, specifically from Nepal and the Philippines. She also acknowledged the presence of many other women representatives who have met during the past two days at the Casa delle Donne and who were currently participating at the Civil Society Forum. A list of women representatives was distributed in the packet of information made available. A list of women representatives at the CSO Forum and the Coalition of Women in Agriculture was distributed to the participants. A copy can be made available upon request.

Jeannette echoed the message of Ambassador Cousin that we are in a historic juncture at a time of a converging crisis – food crisis, climate change and economic crisis – or the so called that perfect storm, that perhaps also offer opportunities as we see enormous rethinking within the reform of major agriculture institutions. The focus is shifting to women farmers, and to investments in women farmers. The women in the room can help to forward that agenda. At the same time, there is some talk on redressing past mistakes, with that new awareness that we have to temper our excitement to also understand the challenges. Policy statements could easily reverse if we do not sustain them. And unless we continue to champion at the table around strategic spaces, we can lose the momentum.

The implementation with impact on the ground has not been easy. Partnerships and combined, collective action along vertical and horizontal axes, relations among women farmers, women professionals, women ministers, deputy ministers, business leaders, permanent representatives, and ambassadors may be a solution to sustain the momentum. Now is the time for new, stronger partnerships, such as the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders in Agriculture. The Network is still being formulated and will continue to seize opportunities to engage the interests of participants in the room; she stated that we would like to hear participants' ideas on how to collectively move forward.

In the following session, Jeannette invited the women farmers to share their testimonies, fulfilling a function of the Network to provide opportunities for women at the higher levels to listen to women farmers' perspectives on the current challenges, as well as their solutions to these.

### **The testimonies of women farmers**

#### ***Nereide Segala Coelho (Brazilian farmer and representative from Huairou Commission)***

*"I am a farmer from Brazil with a small amount of land of about one hectare. I have three sons and three cows. It is now 31 years since we have set up our organization Pintades Network working with support NGOs. We can talk about problems but I don't think we really have problems in cases when we have solutions. For example, the drought situation in the 1980s in a semi-arid area like ours. The problem was not that there was no water but how to manage and store water. So, in times when there was rain, we worked with NGOs and we created artificial lakes and dams to store the water. So now we have water, we now have to find other ways. We also learned how to be effective in our access to seeds, inputs, etc., which now helps us to improve our production.*

*We also began to speak with youth. We did a grassroots research and asked them why they do not want to work in agriculture anymore. They said that agriculture is old. The youth wants us to show them the innovations of agriculture. Therefore, we began to build a cooperative to begin the marketing of our local products. Unfortunately, the processing of products has been hampered by industrial invasions. Instead of us doing the food processing, big companies are doing it for us. So we have to find a way to do the processing and storing of our own products. We therefore started to work with NGOs and we were able to get fruit pulping machines. While we were able to produce and also to process, the problem is that we are able to get it to the market in time. As farmers, the problem is ways to get our products to the market in time. We are now doing a lot of exchanges. We also did some exchange visits here in Italy where we saw how differently they work on water salinization. We thought that we could do the same.*

*In the name of small producers, I can say that we are really are the ones carrying out the food production. productions. I believe we can solve the hunger of the world. We can produce. Who has helped us in this work? It is the power of our own communities to find solutions, the support from NGOs that provide knowledge and support for us to continue with our local groups, the public policies that can support this, exchanges with different groups to learn from...*

*Milk production is now in the hands of big producers. We can no longer have control to produce it in our country. Policy can change but hunger and lack of food cannot change. If for example it rained 300 mm in the past two days, it needs to be managed immediately. Like milk is produced each day. Food is a fast thing. It needs immediate work. It cannot wait. We produce every day. We women farmers have a lot of knowledge and we want our knowledge to be recognize. We have our local and indigenous knowledge that we have managed and controlled over time. And we want our knowledge to be used in public policies. Land and water, production and marketing, technology...needs to be in our hands in order to have a change."*

**Violet Shivutse Khayecha (Kenyan farmer and representative of Groots International and Huairou Commission)** *"I am a farmer. Where I live, women work on their own family land to produce food for their family and also to sell their produce as source of livelihood to be able to send our children to school. The biggest number of workers in land are women because they can be paid with little money or in kind. For example, for six hours of work, you are given one kilogram of maize. However, there is also a bias for women because they cannot go to the market. There is the exploitation of women farmers where grants that are provided to communities to subsidize farmers actually become loans. You see this after harvest time, when you are given the harvest to pay back for the loan. In my community, because of climatic changes, women farmers do not have enough to pay back and even remain without food. The situation is worst for women, especially the widows, who do not have access and control of land. Since land is passed through grandfathers and sons, women are not part in any decision-making.*

*Women are now organizing in big groups to educate their fellow women. There are women with experience who are conducting training to groups of women who can also pass them on to other women, such as preservation of food without chemicals and initiating cereal banking which is common during harvest. We are also organizing dialogues with communities on policies concerning land, land inheritance, food security, casual work and living wage so as to avoid labour exploitation, training women as paralegal so that women can be save to own land. We see that it is important to support women in finding solutions and putting mechanisms in place. We are strengthening interventions by women on women's right to land, marketing policy for women to understand marketing in order to protect the producers. These kinds of intervention*

are lacking in rural communities. There are no policy in place that protects producers. There is no directive when people should be paid. Women are experts of farming. They should not be seen only as beneficiary of food security. Women need knowledge on machineries like tractors to make their work lighter. There should be direct resources to support the work of women farmers as everyone knows that it is women who are the food producers. But how do we make it deliberate for policy makers to understand that resources are to be given to women directly?

I have a personal story to share what made me start valuing how women are working. At the age of 25 years, I worked as a volunteer in a horticulture group. They had a programme where you register 100 farmer then you are given some money. The identity cards were mostly given to men. Only a proportion of 20 per cent women were given identity cards. Women were the ones planting the beans. Women worked everyday. But when the time comes for getting payments, the majority of men with identify cards used their money to buy alcohol drinks. While the other 20 per cent women would buy household items for the family like mattress. If you see those women planting the beans, carrying their babies on their back, and even not having access to many facilities like health. The issue is more than food security. It is also about development.”

**Prema Gopalan (India, representative from Huairou Commission)** “I worked for over two decades now supporting grassroots women which represent an untapped potential. There is a base of empowerment of women in self self-help groups where over 40 million women are organized, yet no one would say they are farmers. We have to prove that farmers are also women in our countries. Prior to coming here thanks to WOCAN and FAO, in 21 countries with more than 500 women farmers belonging to the grassroots communities where we work, we conducted a consultation where we highlighted issues brought about by food crisis and also their solutions. Women are adapting and building resilience to their communities. With the food crisis, climate change and disasters happening in communities, there is a differential impact on women food producers. We need to recognize that the risks that women face are changing. The key word is that “small is big.” We do not have to wait for big disaster to happen. The lives of millions of farmers, rural people and urban poor are changing. We need to bring the crisis to our doorstep. With these uncertainties and rapid changes, the action has to be local.

Our work in the UN with the UN Disaster Platform, there is now an instrument that national governments can apply. A Disaster Resilience Fund as a global facility has been established that will help fast track poverty reduction and mitigation of climate change. The facility will be given directly in the hands of agriculture communities to help them diversify their produce, for example.

Women needs to be part of local platforms which connects to national policies, practice informs policies instead of policies informing practice. Grassroots women can easily lead and transform innovations. They need to be a part of decision- making to feedback the lessons of practice. They should be the technical experts for extensions workers, for promotion of strategies, collective farming, seeds banks, small credit , etc. Women have to be part of the entire value chain, not just labors and farmers in farms. Women needs access to markets, to information, to technology, etc., in order to increase their local production. The key is and aggregating women smallholders farmers so that they can face the market directly. The issue of food security and actions need to be decentralized. It should not be so complex and controlled centrally so that transaction between who those who produce the food is made easy.

*We are making an appeal to governments, bilateral and donors, to look at small community farmers. We will take our experience in our work in 10 countries to prove that community funds can make a difference. Women can map vulnerabilities during climate change, they can come up with solutions with local governments so that women can become the local champions to transform others.”*

## **Open Discussion**

Jeannette opened the floor for comments and discussions. She also highlighted a common slogan between WOCAN, Groots International and the Huairou Commission “to put women farmers at the center.”

**Ambassador Mireille Gagnez** of France expressed her thanks to the organizers for the tremendous opportunity as she herself felt the need for a connection with people in the field. Challenged by what she heard from the testimonies, and from her previous role as the Ambassador who worked on HIV/AIDS, she argued that in a sense it is always the same story, in agriculture or anywhere else in the world - women have no rights and are exploited from their childhood to adulthood. Her personal feelings of being deeply committed and, as well, furious about the situation, remain with her. She noted, *“to keep track of myself, I need to manage my furiousness, so that I can act.”* She was reminded by her own upbringing and her own grandmother’s efforts in raising the household. She recalled the words of her grandfather, who believed that if women had been in government, there would have been no war (World War I). With that sense of having her grandmother as her role model, she felt the sense of connection with committed women on the ground. Recognizing the need to design global structures, she stated that people in the field are more important.

**Minister Olivia Muchena**, the Minister of Women’s Affairs and Community Development from Zimbabwe, introduced the goal of her Ministry which is to empower women economically, socially and politically, to strive for equality, and for opportunities to develop communities. The Minister also shared her own personal recollection about her farmer aunt who was working very hard in the field while pregnant and then died in childbirth. She shared a typical scenario in old Rhodesia in late 1950s where most men were in urban areas while most women remained in rural areas, doing agricultural work and sending produce to town. Her experiences with the way of life of rural farmer women like her aunt gave her the motivation to work on women’s empowerment. Since 1995, she has moved from Deputy Minister of Agriculture to the Office of the Vice-President responsible for land reform in 2005, to Minister of Science and Technology five years later, and now the Minister of Women’s Affairs, Gender and Community Development. She said that we are hearing the same things over and over again, and realized that we are doing something seriously wrong. While women have done well in describing the role of women through research work and advocated for them well, the part where we have not done much is in defining a “strategy on how do we make women visible”. She shared some of the strategies used in Zimbabwe since independence in the 1980s , from which lessons can be drawn:

- 1) The government took a decision to provide agriculture inputs to the small holder sector which then resulted in an increase in production yields, reaching a high point in 1999 when smallholders contributed 70 percent of the total maize produce in the country;
- 2) The government increased the number of extension services to the small holder sector with a group approach to training, wherein a majority trained were women. This resulted in an increase of women to

reach 60 percent of the total participants, and an increase of women students attending the agriculture college. As well, female literacy rate increased to 97%;

3) The government passed a paper based on a traditional concept wherein woman have the title to a specific portion of the family farm where she can grow what she wants to grow and control the benefits from the yields. This is called the “mother’s grain yard “, this practice now entitles women to receive inputs for one hectare and can guarantee household food security.

However as the country is currently faced with funding difficulties, it has not been possible to carry out many of the above programmes. The Minister appeals to donor communities to provide agriculture inputs to women. If certain conditions are put in place, the policy framework should include recognition and investment in women for food production. The legal framework already exists. What is lacking is consistent efforts to make women aware of the enormous provisions that exist and how they can take advantage of them.

In regard to the potential work of the Network, the Minister sees a tremendous opportunity for sharing local best practices in a practical manner. For international agencies like FAO, it will be useful for FAO to help us begin to address the issue of developing a ‘strategy.’ Given what we already know about women, if we can only identify what specific strategy we can use in target areas, we will certainly achieve visibility of women.

**Rosy Weiss** from the International Alliance of Women provided an international perspective to the discussion, citing that there are international human rights instruments which are “hard” laws to which our governments have signed up and therefore must be implemented, including the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Referring to the importance of the Beijing +15 as an important link to the discussion where it will be essential for the group to combine forces to get the outcome of the Summit into the Beijing +15, including the specific Summit Declaration on the focus of small-scale women farmers. She also said that she was discouraged by the outcome of the Reformed CFS that did not have any reference to women farmers. Also, Rosy challenged the group to move to strategic thinking in these areas, learning from past mistakes in attempting to achieve the MDGs, specifically MDG 3. Finally, she recommended that the grassroots women’s organizations should not be put in the same category as NGOs and CSOs, as their approach is different.

**Ileana Rivera**, Deputy Permanent Representative of Guatemala, thanked the organizers and expressed the regrets of the head of the delegation of Guatemala. She commended the Network and queried WOCAN regarding private sector representatives inclusion. She expressed endorsement from among the permanent representatives in Rome given the important and substantial role they can play.

Jeannette responded to the query of Ms. Rivera, stating the valuable role of the private sector in the Network. She said that the Network will be seeking for women leaders from private sectors and that perhaps the Permanent Representatives can also help identify the right women to invite. She highlighted the important role of the Permanent Representatives in Rome as the link to the ministries in their countries, stating that they can be very helpful in identifying the right persons at the country level. She pointed to the fact that the Network is still in its infancy, but has come this far thanks to the support of IFAD, Heifer, FAO and the Norwegian Aid and Development Agency (NORAD).



Rosy also mentioned the need to include leaders who are experts of gender budgeting, which is an important mechanism for agriculture.

**Verónica Guerrero** from Venezuela commented that food security is not just a problem of exclusion of women but also the fact that the current development model excludes women, the poor and indigenous communities. The agriculture and development model is such that food is a commodity that can be traded and speculated. It does not recognize the role of women. We are not only fighting for land and water, women are being expelled and being moved to poverty. In the testimonies, we understood the fight of women for food sovereignty. The region of the Americas is now undergoing a tough socio-economic and political battle. This battle has something to do with a changing development model. In Venezuela, we don't only recognize women's rights, we also put women in positions of power; of the five highest positions of power, four are held by women. We also have links with other Latin American countries through south-south cooperation and are beginning to link with Africa.

### **Presentation on the Concept of the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders in Agriculture**

Jeannette then provided a presentation on the Concept of the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders. She presented the goals, objectives, activities and planned outputs. Details can be found in Annex 3.

After Jeannette's presentation, participants provided their inputs, comments and suggestions to further the development of the Network.

*Ambassador Guidaz* expressed her interest to twin with someone from the field like Violet, which will enable both of them to communicate on regular basis on what is going on both sides. The Ambassador cannot represent Violet, but if she hears from her testimonies and stories as a witness, she can at least utilize the exchange to strengthen the arguments in her own efforts to bring women's issues to the forefront of the dialogue.

*Ambassador Cousin* agreed with the suggestion of having a one-to-one, or "twinning" relationship, as a personal goal. She also posed the challenge of continuing and ensuring that the voices we heard today continue. She asked, "As we enter into CFS reform, how can we continue to bring these voices and what they are learning?" The rest of the world needs to hear about the successes of women on the ground. As organizations, we are responsible to continue this kind of forum as part of the regular CFS activities.

*Constance Neely*, Vice-President of Heifer International, also reminded participants that this broader stakeholder dialogue needs to take place. *Violet Shivutse Khayecha* acknowledged the good suggestions and commitments in the organization of networks. She also recognized the presence of two target groups – the professionals and the grassroots organizations. As we keep hearing grassroot voices, which are our target, the monitoring measures can take on two forms: one that that informs the impact of grassroot, and another that informs the actors that are working with grassroots.

*Cheryl Morden*, Director of the IFAD Liaison Officer in Washington, D.C., cited important opportunities next year in the UN headquarters policy processes where we should accelerate actions, including at the upcoming ECOSOC, the MDG process in September. We need to create a space not only in the margins but also at the center of the debates.

*Minister Muchena* also asked for the issues to be prioritized, in particular dialogue sessions, and in other specific areas which can be done by email follow up.

*Annina Lubbock*, Senior Technical Adviser, Gender and Poverty Targeting at IFAD, expressed the commitment of IFAD to continue to support the Network, together with Heifer International, including activities such as the organizing meeting that can be planned soon. IFAD's support to WOCAN from the beginning in linking women at highest level to women at the grassroots is a winning formula that inspires WOCAN. IFAD also engages strongly with farmers organization where it has been seen that women representation are at grassroots level but not at the higher levels. For the first time, the Farmers' Forum next year will promote women's leadership.

Constance also expressed Heifer's continued support to the Network. Having been in existence for 55 years, Heifer finds its work at the community level as not having much influence in policy making. They are now working to uplift the voices of women and men in the development of food systems that are sustainable.

*Dr. Marcela Villareal* noted the key issues raised during the discussions such as the importance of resources such as secure land tenure, recognition of women's knowledge, and policies. How they are related is emphasized in relation to both voice and visibility. Next year will be the first time in a couple of decades that the flagship publication of FAO, *The State of the Food and Agriculture (SOFA)*, will deal with gender and agriculture. This is an opportunity to include issues related to voice and visibility. FAO will also launch the Land and Gender database. Marcela is proud to say that FAO's new strategy has a full strategy on gender equality, access to resources and inclusion of voices of rural women.

Jeannette closed the meeting, giving great thanks to all of the participants.

## Annex 1: List of Participants

### **PARTICIPANTS FROM MINISTRIES AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES**

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| Tumusime Hope<br>Minister of Agriculture and Lands<br>Kampala<br><b>UGANDA</b>   | Olivia Muchena<br>Minister of Women Affairs, Gender and Community<br>Development<br>Harare<br><b>ZIMBABWE</b>  |
| Søren Skafte<br>Minister, Deputy Permanent Representative to FAO<br>Royal Danish Embassy, Rome<br><b>DENMARK</b>   | Helle Sjelle<br>Member of Danish Parliament<br>Christiansborg, Copenhagen<br><b>DENMARK</b>  |
| Ileana Caravantes<br>Minister Counsellor –Deputy<br>Embassy of Guatemala and Permanent<br>Representation to the UN Agencies Rome<br><b>GUATEMALA</b>   | Mireille Guidaz<br>Ambassador French Representative to FAO, WFP<br>and IFAD<br><b>FRANCE</b>   |
| Ertharin Cousin<br>Ambassador Representation to FAO<br>United States Mission to the UN for FAO<br><b>USA</b>   | Nerissa Cook<br>Deputy Assistant Secretary<br>Bureau of International Organization Affairs<br>U.S. Department of State<br>Washington, D.C.<br><b>USA</b>               |
| Kathryn Russell<br>Foreign Affairs Officer<br>U.S. Department of State<br>Bureau of International Organization Affairs, Office<br>of Human Security, Washington, D.C.<br><b>USA</b>                        | Marisa Plowden<br>U.S. Diplomat<br>U.S. Department of State<br>Washington D.C.<br><b>USA</b>   |
| Verónica Guerrero<br>Directora de Relaciones Internacionales. Ministerio<br>del Poder Popular para Agricultura y Tierras<br>Ministerio del Poder Popular para Agricultura y<br>Tierras<br><b>VENEZUELA</b> | Gladys Urbaneja Durán<br>Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela<br>to FAO<br>Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to<br>FAO<br><b>VENEZUELA</b> |

### **PARTICIPANTS FROM ORGANIZING INSTITUTIONS**

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| <b>WOCAN</b><br>Jeannette Gurung<br>Rosalud de la Rosa<br>Rebecca Rutt | <b>IFAD</b><br>Annina Lubbock<br>Cheryl Morden<br>Maria Hartl                          |
| <b>Heifer International</b><br>Martha Hirpa<br>Constance Neely         | <b>FAO</b><br>Marcella Villarreal<br>Eve Crowley<br>Regina Laub<br>Charmaine Wilkerson |

***PARTICIPANTS FROM NGOs/CSOs***

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| <b><u>Huairou Commission</u></b><br>Violet Shivutse Khayecha, Groots Kenya<br>Prema Gopalan, Swayam Shikshan Prayog, India<br>Nereide Segala Coelho, Rede Pintadas<br>Dahlia Goldenberg, Groots International<br>(interpreter) | <b><u>International Alliance of Women</u></b><br>Rosy Weiss |
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## Annex 2: State Statement by Ambassador Ertharin Cousin

### Statement by Ambassador Ertharin Cousin

#### **Network of Women Ministers and Leaders in Agriculture Side Event at the World Summit on Food Security**

15 November 2009, Rome, Italy

10:00 – 12:30

#### ***As written***

® Thank you for inviting me to the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders in Agriculture event on the occasion of the World Summit on Food Security. I am pleased to see that all of us, women leaders, are taking the leadership to focus on women's contribution to agricultural growth.

® As you know, President Obama has made global food security one of our country's top priorities because we recognize that chronic hunger threatens individuals, governments, societies, and borders.

® (root causes) Today's challenges to global food security represent the convergence of several factors: declining domestic and international investment in agriculture, droughts and floods exacerbated by climate change, shocks to the global economy that affect food prices, lack of access to necessary inputs and tools, and spikes in the price of oil that increase transportation costs.

® For more than a billion people worldwide – one out of every six of us - , the daily effort to grow, buy, or sell food is the defining struggle of their lives. This is not acceptable to us as women and mothers, and it cannot be acceptable to us as leaders.

® People who are chronically hungry or undernourished and can't care for their families are left with feelings of hopelessness and despair, which can lead to tension, conflict, even violence. And children are unable to live the life they deserve. In dozens of countries since 2007, there have been riots over food price increases. So food security is not only about food availability, but also about access and affordability.

® Those of us here to participate in the Summit do recognize and understand the issue of food security. We here know that it is women who feed the world. But if we are to support women in this role – a role necessary to achieving global food security – we must make sure that they are empowered to contribute fully. We cannot afford to ignore the role women play in agricultural production as well as the need to provide women with extension services, knowledge, tools, and land title (including the ability to maintain) in order to sustain long-term agricultural growth, and to ensure all members in the family are fed with nutritious food.

#### **Women as Food Providers and Producers**

® When President Obama asked Secretary Clinton to help lead a whole-of-government effort on food security, and asked me to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the UN Agencies for Food and Agriculture, there was no question that women and girls would play a vital role in our plan and in our work.

® Women are not only the primary food providers in most homes, women are also primary producers of food in the world. Women are often the farmers who cultivate food crops in their communities, and women produce the commercial crops alongside the men in their households as a source of income. When women have an income, substantial evidence indicates that the income is more likely to be spent on food and children's needs. Women are generally responsible for food selection and preparation and for the care and feeding of children. Women are the key to food security for hungry households.

® According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, women produce half of the world's food and 60-80% of the food in developing countries. Again the facts tell us the majority of the world's farmers are small-scale farmers and women are the majority of those small-scale farmers.

® Yet women only own 1% of the world's land. And women are often left out of agricultural plans, or development plans. Their inclusion needs to be explicit and prioritized.

### **A Gender-Inclusive Food Security Strategy**

® Secretary of State Clinton presented the U.S. Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative at the United Nations in September. In the U.S. plan we ensure that gender is clearly stated throughout our strategy, and we worked to include its inclusion in the five principles adopted at the G8 Summit in L'Aquila, when President Obama and other leaders pledged a \$20 billion investment to grow agriculture in the next three years. If the Declaration as written is adopted here at the Summit, women are clearly and specifically included.

® The U.S. firmly believes that a food security policy can only succeed when gender is taken into consideration. Therefore, I would like to highlight several actions which we believe are "foundational" to efforts aimed at increasing food security, and encourage you to consider these or similar measures as you begin or continue to develop food security policy and strategy in your own country.

® **First, countries must recognize and invest in women as farmers and agents of economic change, rather than as home producers or assistants in farm households.** Even though the reality is that women are the primary producers in small-scale farms, their role is usually neglected in the national policy discussion. National agricultural policy is almost always designed based on the assumption that men are the nation's farmers. Ignoring the role of women as farmers makes national agricultural policy incomplete and inadequate to address issues concerning women, from access to markets, water management and adaptation, use of fertilizers, seeds, and biodiversity, to enhancing quality of products and business management.

® **Second, we must ensure that women have legal rights and access to land and productive assets.** The legal control of land as an asset remains one of the key challenges to women in most developing countries. While women labor on farms, their legal right to land ownership is usually not protected despite the fact

that most countries already have laws to ensure women's right to land. This lack of implementation of women's land rights is due to the traditional norm that men are often seen as heads of households, and land, as a highly valuable form of property, is thus often seen as a possession or ownership of men, not women. I am pleased to see that the FAO has recently begun consultations over the first international guidelines on governance of land tenure. As Ambassador I and my team will work to ensure women are specifically discussed and protected as a part of this work.

® **Third, expand women and girls' access to agricultural inputs, information and technology, extension services, and markets.** A successful food security strategy must ensure and expand women's access to all the relevant information, technology, credits and financing, skills training, and extension services to enable women to be productive farmers. Oftentimes, when implementing a new policy, men are naturally the first ones to receive such knowledge and tools and women are largely left out of the process.

® **Fourth, we must enhance opportunities, incentives, and returns to women from small farm households in commercial agriculture.** While women have proven to be productive small farm producers, many of them would like to expand their production to a larger scale and to bring additional income to their family. Women must be informed of, included, and even targeted for commercial agricultural business opportunities. In most small and medium enterprises, women have proven to be successful owners and businesswomen. In fact, micro loan programs have a payment rate at 95-98% for women. Commercial agriculture can potentially grow faster and more equitably when there is more women's participation.

® **Fifth, strengthen and seek the involvement of rural women's associations.** In India, women's self help groups and farmer organizations have been effective in promoting the local economic growth. Governments should encourage the growth of rural women's associations and greater participation in farmers' associations because women must have a venue to communicate more effectively with policy makers about their interests and issues of concern. This process will increase the inclusiveness – and therefore the impact – of agriculture and food security policies.

## Conclusion

® [I would like to end my statement with a story that Secretary Clinton told when she gave her first public speech on the global food security initiative. It is a simple story, but it captures the basic foundation of our strategy.]

® [Imagine a typical small-scale farmer. SHE lives in a rural village, rises before dawn, and walks miles to collect water. If drought, blight, or pests don't destroy her crops, she may raise enough to feed her family – and may even have some left over to sell. But there's no road to the nearest market and no one there who can afford to buy her food.

® [Now consider a young man in a crowded city 100 miles from that farmer. He has a job that pays pennies. He goes to the market but the food is rotting or priced beyond reach.]

® [She has extra food to sell and he wants to buy it. But that simple transaction can't take place because of complex forces beyond their control.]

® [Helping them to overcome those complex forces is really what we're all about.] Meeting the challenge of global hunger is at the heart of "food security" – empowering the world's farmers to sow and harvest plentiful crops, effectively care for livestock and catch fish, and then ensure that the food they produce reaches those who need it. And as women leaders we must ensure that women can benefit from our growth strategies, and thus contribute to increasing global food security, for her family, for her community, for her country, for our world, for all.



## Annex 3

### Presentation by Dr. Jeannette Gurung on the Concept of the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders in Agriculture

#### 1.1 Goal

The goal is to strengthen the capacity of women ministers and leaders at the international level to act effectively to deepen and accelerate the integration of the interests and perspectives of poor women farmers into global food security initiatives.

#### 1.2 Objectives

The objectives are to:

- a. Help consolidate the emerging recognition within international policy forums of the central role of women in achieving global food security, including at the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 15-year Review, 2010 General Assembly MDG review and preparatory meetings;.
- b. Support the identification, development, and advocacy at the international level of specific policies, action priorities, approaches, and methods for strengthening support to poor women farmers;
- c. Encourage accountability for existing commitments of bilateral and multi-lateral donor agencies and government that support rural women and women farmers and – where they appear – to identify gaps in existing commitments.

#### 1.3 Target Group and Countries

Potential members of the Network will include:

- As of 2009, women ministers from countries including, Belgium, Bolivia, Chile, Denmark, European Community, Finland, Germany, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland and Uganda; and sub-ministers in countries including, India, Liberia, Nepal and Philippines;
- Women parliamentarians;
- Heads of civil society organizations and networks, including international organizations of women farmers and rural women;
- Business leaders;
- High-level officials of intergovernmental institutions; and
- Researchers and academics.

Particular efforts will be made to ensure geographic balance and significant participation by women leaders from developing countries. Noting that more women ministers are currently from developed countries, the

Network may need to include more leaders from the sub-minister level to assure optimal developing country representation. The criteria for member selection shall be determined at a Organising Meeting of the Network in 2010.

#### 1.4 Activities

In fulfilment of the goal and objective, the Recipient will:

- a. Form a Steering Committee to guide the work of the Network. This group will have responsibilities to develop criteria for membership, produce a list of potential members, invite women leaders to join, develop a two-year work plan, and monitor the performance of the Secretariat;
- b. Consult with members and draft a Call to Action;
- c. Conduct an Organising Meeting that will adopt the membership criteria and workplan;
- d. Provide information and knowledge of best practices and successful initiatives to support Network members to develop effective policies and implement programmes to strengthen women farmers and producers;
- e. Organise networking meetings (based on the model of the Recipient's Women in Agriculture and Natural Resources Management – WARM) with key women leaders in Washington DC and Rome to build support and enable cohesion and collective thinking within Rome-based food agencies and the Washington-based international financial institutions and NGOs;
- f. Forge linkages and collaboration between the Network of Women ministers and Leaders in Agriculture and the Network of Women ministers and Leaders in the Environment, as well as other networks of women in agriculture and rural development to develop partnerships amongst leaders engaged in food security and climate change initiatives at the national, regional, and global levels (thus overcoming sectoral barriers that currently exist that separate these two global agenda);
- g. Provide support to the Network to facilitate communication, information and knowledge sharing; learning, joint strategy development and advocacy; and monitoring and outreach; and
- h. Prepare communication messages for the public media to generate awareness and support for the Network's goals.

#### 1.5 Outputs

The Network will produce the following outputs:

- a. A Call to Action outlining key priorities and specific policy and action recommendations to advance women's role in food security and agricultural development, as well as an approach to monitoring existing commitments

- a. At least four policy briefs on selected priority issues critical to women's interests, related to food security and climate change, including adaptation to climate change, REDD (Reduced Emissions from Degradation and Deforestation).
- b. A dedicated website, including a Members Only space for information exchange and dialogue among the women leaders
- c. Summaries of the proceedings of face-to-face meetings of the Network and events that the Network may sponsor
- d. Monitoring report on progress and obstacles faced on fulfilment of existing commitments through qualitative analysis (case stories, story-telling, comparative analysis) building from existing identified key benchmarks and indicators relevant to women farmers (i.e., from Beijing Platform of Action, CEDAW Article 14, 15 and 16 on rural women's access to resources and the MDGs) in at least ten countries identified in three regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America.
- e. Press releases and press kits for key events related to food security and climate change