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A NOTE FROM THE WOMEN MAJOR GROUP ORGANIZING PARTNERS

This document represents the inputs received by the Women Major Group organizing partners from two consultation processes organised during the Africa and the Asia Regional Implementation Meeting (RIM) held in Addis Ababa (22 October 2007) and in Jakarta (26 November 2007). The consultation processes provided common priority issues in these two regions to be addressed by the Women Major Group in this Discussion Paper relevant to policies, programmes and practices in agriculture, rural development, land, drought and desertification. Additionally, a two-week electronic consultation process was conducted to major women's networks and several listserv that are engaged in CSD processes, including Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN), African Women Leaders in Agriculture and the Environment (AWLAE) and GRATIS Foundation (Ghana). A desk review and research of relevant published documents was also conducted.

The concerns and issues of the Women Major Group in ensuring gender mainstreaming and addressing the specific needs of women, particularly rural women, cuts across all the themes and clusters. Hence, the paper focuses on the important role and contribution of women, progress that have been made to protect women's rights, roles and their contribution, obstacles and constraints that women face in support to the advancement of the implementation, lessons learned, priority issues and new opportunities. The paper, however, was not able to fully address the impact to women of current trends that are happening in agriculture, rural

development and land sectors, as well as by the drought and desertification. The lack of gender-disaggregated data and published documentation of successful initiatives by women in agriculture and rural development sector have been a major limitation in the preparation of this paper. Finally, there were very limited inputs received from Latin America and the Caribbean region.

The Women Major Group organizing partners feel that this document still does not represent all the depth of issues and concerns of women for each of the broad and complex issues of CSD themes. It should be noted that this document was prepared with very limited time and human resources by the organizing partners. As such, national and sub-regional consultation processes and country-level case studies preparation are currently being promoted by the organizing papers in Africa and Asia region in order to give a much more in-depth review and analysis on the issues raised in this paper, as well as those issues that still needs to be raised. It is hoped that the results of these processes and analysis of more case studies will be put forward by the Women Major Group organizing partners, including by those who will lead the processes at the country level, during the CSD 16 in May 2008. The organizing partners therefore encourages the reader to view this document as a first step and background in the review, evaluation and analysis of the implementation of the relevant commitments of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Further Implementation of Agenda 21.

I. Introduction

1. More women than men are currently at work in the agricultural sector throughout East Asia, South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa. In other regions, it is the poorer countries that reveal a higher share of female employment in agriculture. Women agricultural workers are responsible for half of the world's food production, and are the main producers of staple crops including rice, maize and wheat, representing 60 to 80 % of the food intake in most developing countries. Women are almost always responsible for children's nutritional needs, "are key players in day-to-day agricultural tasks, the instigators of activities that generate agricultural and non-agricultural income and the custodians of natural and productive resources."¹

2. Agriculture is the backbone of Africa's economy. It accounts for 60% of the total labour force, 20% of the total merchandise exports, 17% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is the biggest source of foreign exchange. Despite its importance, the sector is in a crisis as confirmed by the 200 million people (28% of Africa's population) who are chronically hungry, the 20% undernourished and the 50% living beneath the international poverty threshold of US \$1 day.²

3. In Asia, home to 621 million poor people (two-thirds of the world's total) who earn less than US\$1 a day³, agriculture employs about 60% of the labor force in South Asia and contributes 22% of the regional GDP.⁴

4. Although agriculture accounts for only 5.9% of average GDP across Latin America, it represents more than 10% of overall GDP (up to 32% in the case of Guyana) in 11 of the 33 countries of the region.⁵

Why Women?

5. Data from the International Food Policy Research Institute indicates that women are the key farmers of Africa.⁶ Women perform 90% of the work of processing food crops and providing household water and fuel wood, 80% of the work of food storage and transport from farm to village, 60% of harvesting and marketing work and provide 90% of all agricultural labour (such as hoeing and weeding).⁷ In rural India, agriculture and allied industrial sectors employ as much as 89.5% of the total female labour, and in China, women account for 41.2% of the rural labour force in agriculture and rural enterprises.

6. In view of the above, agriculture sector should assess its contribution to the global economies with an account of the significant role and contribution of women.

II. Review of Commitments Made by Governments

7. **The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**, a legally binding treaty for women, was adopted in 1979 and ratified by 185

countries as of September 2007.⁸ Article 14, Section 2 Part (g) of Article 14 states, “*States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right: To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes*”.⁹

8. Countries that have ratified the Convention are legally bound to put its provisions into practice. They are also committed to submit national reports, at least every four years, on measures they have taken to comply with their treaty obligations. An assessment made in 2004 indicated that 26% of initial State party reports, meaning since the inception of CEDAW, were not submitted. The Committee and the UN system face the challenge of encouraging, putting pressure on, or facilitating the efforts of governments to fulfil their reporting requirements. With the increase in the number of ratifications, the number of overdue periodic reports is also increasing resulting to reduced impact of international scrutiny of the compliance of State parties with the Convention.¹⁰ Analysis of the reports submitted poses a major challenge not only on *de jure* enjoyment of women’s equality, which today is now guaranteed by many countries in their constitutions, but also *de facto* situation that reflect the extent to which women enjoy these rights in their daily lives – the reality of which, particularly for rural women, is still a long way to real implementation and domestication of CEDAW.

9. **The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**, adopted by 189 countries in 1995, called for "*Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society including participation in the decision making process and access to power are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace.*"

10. Other treaties have also forcefully addressed discriminatory practices and disparities between statutory law and customary law. The **Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights established under the International Covenant on Cultural Rights (ICESCR)**, for instance, has criticized discriminatory laws that prevent women from inheriting land such as in Cameroon (1999), Morocco (2000) and Sri Lanka (1998).¹¹

Commitments Made by Governments at the Regional Level

A. Africa Region

11. Africa, and by extension individual African states, have committed themselves to strategically and comprehensively addressing gender-based challenges.

12. African Charter of Human and People's Rights emphasizes the right to gender equality. It calls on the international community to support Africa's efforts in ensuring equal access at all levels of education and to promote and support efforts and initiatives to secure equitable access

to land tenure and clarify resource rights responsibilities. Promoting the role of women in activities is one of the two NEPAD long-term objectives.

13. The Africa Union Commission has developed a Gender Policy which calls for Parity e.g. 50/50.

14. Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have adopted gender policies, declarations and guidelines for the promotion and protection of the human rights of women.

15. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries is in the process of adopting the SADC Gender and Development Protocol which is a unique instrument destined to consolidate all SADC commitments on gender made at regional, continental and international levels such as the Beijing Platform of Action, the CEDAW, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Africa Union Charter on Human and Peoples Rights and the Rights of Women in Africa etc. into a sub regional instrument that will compel SADC Member States to accelerate efforts towards achieving gender equality and equity in the Region.

- 51 of the 53 African member states of AU have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
- 31 of 53 countries have signed and four have ratified the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa.

- Attempts are under way to engender poverty surveys conducted during the poverty reduction strategy processes, which will provide the basis for stronger gender analysis in macroeconomic and socio-economic profiles. Between 1995-2005, 48 countries prepared poverty reduction strategies and action plans that included gender concerns.
- The consideration of gender budgets in some countries has triggered more transparent processes for gender responsiveness in public expenditures.

B. Asia Region

16. Member countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand have taken legal steps and policy measures to mainstream women's participation in development.¹²

17. In India, 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment passed in 1992 provided for 1/3 representation of women in the three tiers of local government and 1/3 of their chairpersons to be women. A million women are members of these institutions in each of the two elections held since the early 1990s; an estimated 6 million women have been positively impacted by this legislation.

C. Latin America and the Caribbean Region

18. All Latin American countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

19. As of 2004, women held 19% of the seats of Parliament in Latin America and the Caribbean, as compared to 9% of seats in South Asia, 13% of seats in Sub-Saharan Africa and 18% of seats in East Asia and the Pacific.¹³

Selected Case Studies

i. Women's Right to Land in Nicaragua¹⁴ and in Ethiopia¹⁵

20. **In Nicaragua**, strong political support during the late 1980s and early 1990s for women's right to land has significantly increased the number of women with a legal title to land. Achieved through joint titling programmes, this policy reflects the power of political will in promoting gender equality in land rights. From 10% of all women-held land titles issued in the 1980s, the figure jumped to 42% between 1997 and 2000.

21. This initiative came about as a result of several crucial steps: firstly, the government formally recognized women's rights by ratifying the CEDAW convention in 1981. The establishment of a Women's Office in 1983 was accompanied by a change in constitution in

1987, explicitly guaranteed equal rights to women. In 1995, provisions within agrarian legislation encouraged allocation and joint-titling of land to couples. Now, it is compulsory for married couples.

22. Vital to all of the changes was a Cooperatives Act back in 1981, granting women the right to be members of cooperatives (to which many quickly joined). Through cooperatives, women were able to gain access to land for cultivation, obtain financial services and government provided training services, take part in real decision-making and vocalize their needs for the betterment of all Nicaraguan women.

23. **In Ethiopia**, from 2003 to 2005, certificates were issued to about 6 million households (18 million plots), which documented inheritable land-use rights of both the husband and wife jointly, while still restricting market transfers. More than 80% of evaluation survey respondents indicated that certification improved women's situations.

ii. Targeted Approach for Women in Nepal ¹⁶

24. An inter regional WIN project under the title of "Empowerment of Women in Irrigation and Water Resources Management for Household Food Security and Health" was implemented as a pilot activity in Cambodia, Zambia and Nepal with a design of testing an innovative methodology to reach to the deprived households with irrigation services through gender empowerment.

25. Although the project implementation process in Nepal was negatively affected by the country's disturbing political conflict situation as well as the historical incident of Royal Massacre that took place in 2001 hampering project implementation for at least 3 months, later on the project was operated quite successfully through its district partners, especially local women farmers groups and local women social mobilisers.

26. The project has been providing services to 2015 resource poor households, targeting women members, by enabling them to organize for improving their socio-economic status. At the start of the project, most of the targeted households were able to feed themselves for 3 to 9 months only, now they have been able to handle their food insecurity problem by accessing food availability for 10 to 12 months through year round irrigation, crop diversification, animal husbandry, thereby consuming as well as selling agro-products to buy additional food grain.

27. The main problem addressed by the project focused on dealing with the challenges in the area of sustainability of irrigation systems, due to lower participation and benefit sharing by poor households, especially women. The traditional irrigation systems, due to its high emphasis on growth oriented production-based characteristics for enhancing national economic development has somehow failed to address the interests of the marginalized poor farmers, especially the illiterate, the landless, the small land holders, economically exploited and socially discriminated caste groups. Participation of the vulnerable section of the communities

is almost left behind by such irrigation systems due to having much technically oriented but socially devoid approach.

28. Some significant lessons were learnt through the years of implementation are listed as below:

- a. Socially inclusive targeting: WIN targeting process and experience has proven that the resource poor women, especially from the socially excluded caste group can be reached through a participatory social analysis conducted by involving all sectors of the community, once the implementers are well oriented about the project's social objectives and expected impact. The poor households were chosen through participative interaction through building up consensus also with the better off households.
- b. Multi dimensional partnership approach: Establishing partnership among various development implementers has been highly productive. Besides sharing responsibilities between agencies, sharing of organizational values also took place between GO and NGO working culture.
- c. Organizing women by local women social mobilisers: The role of local women social mobilisers in WIN project for organising women groups and their capacity

development has remained crucial in mobilizing women's participation and benefit sharing in WIN project.

- d. Coordinated leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture proved to be effective and growing in expertise, especially on mutually internalizing the need for combining irrigation and agriculture for benefit of the women farmers' interests as well as promoting awareness on health and nutritional issues.
- e. Capacity building of diverse stakeholders: Through capacity building of local and district WIN team members on gender integrated participatory planning and multi purpose development approach, the WIN model has remained effective in transforming attitude and behavior towards participation and benefit sharing of women in development activities.
- f. Women friendly and pro-poor irrigation technology: WIN project implemented women friendly micro-irrigation systems for household food security, such as, drip irrigation, treadle pumps, sprinklers, etc. with technical support of International Development Enterprise's input.
- g. Gender integration: Through gender integrated project participatory intervention the project achieved significant changes in the area of women's empowerment related to increased mobility, decision making capacity, managerial role in small irrigation

and planning local development activities, claiming other productive resources and so on, which should be more and more strengthened for sustainability, through building up capacity of the implementers.

iii. An integrated approach – gender sensitization workshops and training on access to technology - for shea butter extraction for Gbimsi women in Ghana¹⁷

29. The Villinkrikri group of Gbimsi is a group of loosely associated women engaged in the extraction of shea butter as an income generating activity to sustain their livelihoods. The group is made of forty-one women between the ages of 20 to 79 years. Most of the women are married with about half of them being second or third wives. About half of the women have a household size of 4 to 6 persons while the rest have household sizes between 7 to 15 people and the average annual income per household is about ten million cedis equivalent to about US\$1000. Apart from the secretary none of the women is educated or had any idea about banking.

30. These women used to extract shea butter using the traditional method, which is, characterized by a number of production and environmental drawbacks. These included the arduousness of the seven different operations involved in the process, the long processing time, low production capacity, excessive use of water and firewood, and the women's long periods of exposure to heat and smoke. Apart from the process being labour intensive it is also time

consuming. For instance, the women had to walk about 2 km to mill their kernel or use the traditional grinding stone to grind the kernel before extracting the oil by traditional means.

31. Owing to lack of working capital the women was manipulated by exporters to produce butter for them at very low cost and under very deplorable conditions. A series of Gender Sensitisation workshops were held followed by training in processing machine operation and maintenance. The traditional leaders provided land which paved the way for the construction of a permanent structure to house the mechanised assembly of shea butter processing equipment. The mechanised assembly of shea butter processing equipment comprising of a mill, dehuller, crusher and a diesel engine was then installed.

32. Gender Sensitisation workshops were held for the District Assembly and husbands of the members of the women's group. The women were then made to travel outside their locality to see what other women elsewhere have done. The piloting of the commercial production of shea butter using the installed equipment commenced. The women were then trained in bookkeeping and basic accounting after which a bank account was opened for group and members through linkage with the local bank and district assembly.

33. Some significant lessons were learnt during the implementation of the project including the following:

- a. Dealing with a completely illiterate group was a major obstacle at the initial stages but the frequent organisation of gender training sessions helped to boost the confidence of the women, which contributed a lot to the women learning faster than expected.
- b. The women contribute to the total volume of shea butter produced in the district. However, lack of guaranteed markets, low output prices, and therefore minimum net margins is a challenge. The high level of illiteracy constraints their full participation in community development processes that are political and require adequate knowledge of numeracy and understanding of the spoken and written English language.
- c. Collaboration between stakeholders enabled the successful completion of the project.

iv. “Passing on the Gift” and Gender Mainstreaming in Zambia¹⁸

34. In Zambia, the work of Heifer in five provinces have reached an approximate number of 7,000 beneficiaries who have become self sufficient through the gifts of food, income producing animals, and training in environmentally sustainable farming. Heifer project in Zambia that has a strategic focus to increase participation of women in development at all levels, also recognizes men’s participation in planning and implementation and benefiting from

the project. Their gender mainstreaming approach is based on *Gender Integration Framework* that includes political will, technical capacity, accountability, and organizational culture.

35. Strategies:

- Train staff and partners on gender issues by hiring a consultant.
- Give priority to groups with at least 50% female membership in project approval process.
- Develop tools for gender analysis.
- Strengthen partnership with gender-oriented organizations.
- Use gender case studies to develop curriculum.
- Give equal opportunity to women, men and children at all levels of project implementation.

36. Lessons Learned:

- Programmes and projects have been directly influenced by new institutional attitudes towards women, who are now trained for and receive large animals. The gender mainstreaming strategy of giving women large draft animals has challenged stereotypes that restrict women to the ownership of small ruminants.
- Men's initial cynicism with regards to the leadership of women, at both the institutional and project level, has begun to be replaced by one of the support.

- With full understanding of the impact of cultural traditions on women’s societal position – particularly with reference to inheritance rights – the organization revised its policies to “Passing on the Gift” to the family (men and women), instead of giving exclusive ownership to the male as had been done prior to gender mainstreaming.
- Heifer International introduced a clause in the contract signed with farmers that allows a woman to inherit the animals if her spouse dies. Culture dictates that animals and other property of the male would go to his relatives, not to his wife and children. This represents a significant change and characterizes the transformative impact of gender mainstreaming strategies.
- Dual or collective ownership of resources and property, introduced by Heifer revised contracts, has encouraged women to play a more active and frontline role in public negotiations and discussion in communities.

v. The Agri-business Women from Saurashtra in India

37. In a small village Jambur located in Talala taluka of Junagadh district, Gujarat, one would come across people belonging to Siddi Community. They all look like Africans, but

speak Gujarat. Siddis are tribal people primarily of African origin (Ethiopia) who were brought to India about 400 year's back to work as slaves for the king of Junagadh.

38. The Siddis work as daily laborers in agriculture and non-agriculture based occupations. Women are predominantly engaged in collection and selling of fuel wood from Gir Forest and this is one of the main sources of livelihood. A majority of Siddis are poor and do not have enough resources to sustain their livelihoods. They do own some land (average of 0.5 hectares) but most do not cultivate it for lack of enough resources. Well-off farmers and moneylenders, against a very nominal price, take care of their land. There have been government and missionary efforts to rehabilitate them but with little success since their approach was mostly welfare and not based on self-reliance. Also, most efforts focused on the men whereas the siddhi women are the main bread-earners.

39. AgaKhan rural support programme (India), an NGO, undertook a range of interventions in the village and Jambur women group who made an exposure visit to Surendernagar and got encouraged demanded the activity of producing compost. The group sells the products directly in the villages nearby and around, though some farmers from outside Saurashtra too have bought the produce from them.

40. Hirbaben says, *“Organic farming is emerging as one of the solutions to sustainable agriculture and environment. It improves soil porosity, the compost binds the nutrients in the soil making them available to plants for longer period of time, it improves plants and root*

growth because the essential nutrients including trace elements such as iron, manganese, copper, zinc and boron are available when required by the plants. It improves water holding capacity, resistance to wind and water erosion and suppresses plant diseases”.

41. They calculated that with the use of compost, in one acre of land, the farmers now save about Rs.1630/-. The farmers used to put 2 truckloads of cow dung and one bag of DAP worth Rs. 4000 and 430/- respectively. With compost, they put one truck load of cow dung, 25 kgs of DAP and 3 bags of organic manure worth Rs. 2800/-. Over the years, Jambur women group is one of the most successful groups who have been promoting organic farming. The group has also come out with a detailed brochure about the uses and impacts of the produce and has been promoting the marketing by actively participating in Krishi melas (Women’s fair). The women are not only earning some income but have learnt the ways of handling business and now look forward to undertaking vermi-composting too.

III. Obstacles and Constraints in Advancing Implementation

A. Gender inequality as a major cause of “slowing our progress”

42. Gender inequalities hurt the economy. Emerging macroeconomic analyses on Africa by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank consistently show that gender inequality acts as a constraint to growth and poverty reduction. For instance, *Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?* (2000), a study by the three

institutions, reveals that Africa has unexploited hidden growth reserves residing in potential partnerships between governments and households, particularly the women in these households. The study concludes that gender inequality is both an economic and social issue, that greater gender equality could be a potent force for accelerated poverty reduction in Africa¹⁹, and that reducing gender inequality in access to and control of key resources necessary for growth is a concrete means of accelerating and diversifying growth, making growth more sustainable and ensuring that the poor both contribute to and benefit from that growth. This is consistent with other macro-analysis work demonstrating the extent to which gender inequality directly and indirectly limits economic growth.²⁰

43. Benefits of addressing gender have been documented in different situations as indicated below:

Gender and Growth: Forgone Production, Income and Well-being

Burkina Faso: Shifting existing resources between men's and women's plots within the same household could *increase output* by 10-20%.

Kenya: Giving women farmers the same level of agricultural inputs and education as men could *increase yields* obtained by women by more than 20%.

Tanzania: Reducing time burdens of women could *increase household cash incomes* for smallholder coffee and banana growers by 10%, labour productivity by 15% and capital productivity by 44%.

Zambia: If women enjoyed the same overall level of capital investment in agricultural inputs, including land, as their male counterparts, *output in Zambia could increase* by up to 15%.

Sources: World Bank 2007: Women Key To Effective Development and Various, in Blackden and Bhanu 1999.

44. Stemming all the way from the macro levels down to the household levels, the lack of recognition and value of women's contributions severely limits women's ability to maintain a position of power and equality. Domestic and reproductive tasks such as collecting fuel wood and water and caring for children and the elderly are often perceived to be women's duty and generally not considered economic activities, and therefore not counted as "work", though they greatly increase women's burden.²¹

45. Situations pointed out by that even when major operations related to agriculture such as for example like dairying are handled by women but the income from agriculture and dairying is received by men since they handle marketing of the produce and marketing of produce is normally not done by women. The decisions to use family income are normally taken by men and consequently the investment in agricultural operations does not receive the desired priority and consequently the agricultural production suffers.

B. Women's fundamental human rights ignored

46. Biases in formal and customary laws, social norms and values commonly result in fewer and weaker legal rights for women. Gender-biased discrimination equates to less pay for equal work, less social protection and representation through unions and collective bargaining and reduced opportunities for education. Women continue to be denied rights to own or control the land that they cultivate. They remain unwaged and invisible workers on family farms or underpaid on other's farms.

47. The United Nations Economic and Social Council Commission on the Status of Women states, "land rights discrimination is a violation of human rights."²²

C. Women's Lack of Access, Ownership and Control Over Land

48. Land, is the base of social, political and economic life in many developing countries. Experiences from development projects show that women's independent land rights and control can enhance food security, economic opportunities, improve child nutrition, health and education, and even reduce domestic violence.

49. Globally, women own less than 5% of the world's land.²³ Even among large and growing body of *de facto* female-headed households (such as in India where it is estimated at 35%), only few have direct access to land in their own rights.

50. In Kenya, the Federation of Kenya Women Lawyers (FIDA, 1996) reports that only about 1% of women own land. In Uganda, although women provide 70% of the agricultural labour²⁴, they hold only 7% of the registered land titles.²⁵ In Cameroon, land registers show that less than 10% of women hold land titles and in the North West Province only 3.2%, representing barely 0.1% of the registered land mass.

51. In many developing regions women typically must obtain rights to land through men, generally through their husbands and sons. As a result, particularly for widows and women-headed households, weaker land rights make them most vulnerable in society. In Cameroon, women become insecure due to death of their husbands or fathers that in some cases even if a legal document is issued by any of the above parties to their wives or daughters, witchcraft sets in or serious boundary dispute just to eliminate the women from property rights.²⁶

52. Likewise, allocation, occupation and use of communal lands are generally obtained through government selected bodies, which grant occupation according to customary law, where an adult married man is allocated land for use by himself and his family. Thus women only have access to and land and related natural resources through their spouse or male relatives.

53. The diversity of women's rights to land within indigenous communities merits a deeper understanding whether customary practices are under threat or at times can also protect women's collective rights. Customary law can also be seen as flexible and open to different

interpretations, however, the fact that public spaces are controlled by men, interpretations tend to favor men. For example, women in Arunachal Pradesh in north east India have begun to use this flexibility in customary law to make their claims to land, putting forward an alternate interpretation in support of their rights. Indigenous women across the globe are further struggling to expand their representation within institutions, both traditional and of the state, in order to build a facilitative environment.²⁷

D. Lack of Access to Productive Resources (i.e., credit, inputs, gender-based technology, markets and market chain, extension services)

- In rural Asia, where women produce 60% of food, they own only 2% of the land, receive only 1% of all agricultural credit and can access only 5% of all agricultural extension resources.²⁸
- An analysis of credit schemes in five African countries found that women received less than 10 percent of the credit awarded to male smallholders.
- Only 15 percent of the world's agricultural extension agents are women.
- Agriculture extension service is dominated by men in the absence of sufficient number of women extension workers. Because of social customs, the women do not

freely interact with men and can, therefore, not benefit from extension service to the desired extent.

- The participation of women in rural development either through commercial agriculture or related enterprises is hugely constrained by limited access to markets and market chains, as well as lack of credit.
- As a result of male domination, the technologies developed in agriculture sector are not gender neutral, but are biased in favor of men. The women, therefore, find it difficult to use such technologies.

E. Lack of Women's Participation in Decision-Making

54. Almost two thirds of the world's illiterate are women, with the proportion varying widely by region. Women's low education levels and disproportionate domestic responsibilities combined with cultural and social norms restrict their ability to speak out in front of men, limit their ownership and management of land and money and undermine their involvement in productive employment, rural organizations, and public decision making.²⁹

55. Training is usually arranged at central places away from homes of women cannot be fully availed of by women because of social customs and also because the women cannot leave their children at home when they travel to attend trainings.

56. Women's participation in community organizations that manage the natural resources on which agriculture depends can improve the effectiveness of the organizations. Survey results of 33 rural programs in 20 countries found higher levels of collaboration, solidarity and conflict resolution in community organizations where women played active roles.³⁰

57. Studies have shown that reserving seats for women increases investment in the type of infrastructure that is relevant to women and those village councils are more effective when gender-sensitivity training is provided to both male and female councilors.³¹

F. The changing context of women's lives due to environmental threats, drought and desertification

58. Interactions between humans and the natural environment, such as over-grazing, have brought about remarkable changes over the years leading to drought and desertification and increasing climate variability. Women are significantly affected when erosion and diminished soil fertility result in decreased crop and livestock productivity, thereby reducing the sources of income derived from these products.

59. As environmental conditions worsen, more men migrate for longer periods, sometimes even permanently. Women are particularly affected due to increase in workloads as a result of growing numbers of male migration. At times when the migrating men are contributing less and

less to family incomes, women are therefore carrying the responsibility to expand their productive role to earn incomes and ensure living standards above mere survival for their households. Women are facing the consequences of drought, such as in the dry regions like Sudan and Ethiopian Somali regions (including JiJiga zone), where women are facing series of problems in fetching clean drinking water and for health and sanitation women usually travel about two to three hours per day to collect 15-20 liters, transported on their heads or back.³²

60. As women in drought affected areas increase their contributions of farm labour and household maintenance, they are also becoming responsible for more decision-making if long-term migration means that major decisions, such as the purchase or sale of livestock or changes in cropping patterns, cannot wait for the men's return. Women are becoming *de facto* heads of households, and this is increasing the vulnerability of families to extreme poverty as women assume traditionally male responsibilities without the same levels of access to financial, technological and social resources. Women's workloads and responsibilities have become greater, but women have not enjoyed a corresponding rise in influence and opportunities.³³

61. It has been observed that many African and Asian women increasingly migrate not only in urban cities but also abroad in order to sell their labour due to poor labour wage in their home countries. There are observations which show larger number of women Diasporas found in Arabian countries that are coming from Africa.

62. Existing information reveals that women perform their strategic roles in agriculture and rural development under great resource and decision-making constraints. Women are especially affected where migration, marital instability, male mortality, conflict and single parenthood have left them as heads of households.

IV. Priority Issues

63. The following section is a list of priority issues to be put forward at the CSD 16 which were identified by the participants from the consultation processes (Side Events) organized by the Women Major Group organizing partners during the Africa and Asia Regional Implementation Meetings:

Priority Issues Identified for Women and....

A. Agriculture

- More food through land ownership
- High levels of poverty and unbalanced work load, otherwise known as the ‘double burden’ of unrecognized and undervalued labour
- Limited research attention to gender and women’s issues in agriculture
- Lack of secure access to land, water, energy, credit, property and other strategic resources resulting in low economic productivity

- Gender biased technologies, absence of women-friendly labor saving devices and limited training that perpetuate time and resource constraints
- Inadequate support for women's entrepreneurship, small businesses, cooperatives and organizations
- Markets and Infrastructure
- Lack of skills – movement from subsistence to commercial
- Sustainable Agriculture practices such as Conservation agriculture is helping women and environment and productivity – there are several cases that show labour reduction, however need access to equipment
- Agricultural production policies shall explicitly include gender equality and active promotion and inclusion of women
- Loss of agriculture workers and farmers due to HIV/AIDS
- Women are farmers too!

B. Land

- Inadequate ownership/access to land by women
- Land rights for women
- Ownership and access to land – improve women's livelihood/socio-economic status
- Access to land through facilitating and advocating for the review /reform of gender sensitive customary laws and practices
- Governance
- Skills for effective participation in governance

- Policies that grant equal access and control to women and land and other natural and productive resources

C. Desertification

- Land and Ecosystem Management
- Access to water
- Flooding
- Reliance on natural resources as source of livelihoods and sustainability
- Awareness and involvement of women at all levels of NRM
- Participation in rehabilitation programmes and projects
- Migration
- Conflict – resource use

D. Drought

- Vulnerability of women to drought
- Integrated management of natural resources
- Be involved in water and sanitation programmes and resource management
- Unsustainable NRM impacts negatively on women- Energy, food, water

E. Rural development

- Capacity to demand livelihood and improving assistance
- Access to services and amenities

- Economic empowerment (increased access to resources)
- Rural-Urban Migration
- Un-employment
- Lack of energy
- Low resources allocation to rural development

F. Africa

- Peace and stability
- Women play a key role in food security in Africa

G. Cross Cutting Issues

- Women and climate change
- Women and globalization
- Urbanization – majority in slums (No social amenities)
- Illiteracy among women
- Culture and leadership – traditional roles
- Population pressure not being dealt with
- Minimal formal representation of women in local and national governmental bodies and institutions
- Low levels of education including basic skills, health and reproductive health education, and upsurge of sexual and domestic violence

- Gender concerns continue to be treated rhetorically or as separate women's projects
- Weak mechanisms lacking adequate capacity, authority and funding for integrating gender equality and empowerment
- Poor utilization of gender sensitive indicators (often not collected appropriately, lost in aggregation of published data, or not used)
- Lack of effective monitoring and evaluation of existing systems designed to promote gender equality
- Very low numbers of women professionals in agriculture and natural resource management organizations, especially in extension
- Agricultural and natural resource management institutions remain male dominated and without the conditions that would enable gender sensitive programming and accountability to women farmers.

V. New Strategies and Opportunities

A. Women in Decision-Making

64. More women should be involved in decision making and policy processes related to agriculture, rural development, land, and drought and desertification issues. There must be active implementation of the affirmative action of appointing women (40% of all appointments) to key positions in public service and in national executive or policy-making institutions so that they can influence policy. In cases where there is a shortage of women with the requisite skills,

the government in collaboration with relevant organisations such as civil society groups can identify women who can be trained to become more effective leaders. Women in decision making positions should be the drivers and movers of the new agriculture and rural development agenda.

65. In the same token, women should be recognised as key stakeholders and change agents in sustainable development. There is a need to institutionalise equal participation of women in policy formulation and development programming.

B. Allocation of Resources to support gender equality

66. Development Aid to agriculture currently comprises only one tenth of all bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member nations, and aid to support gender equality is only about 8% of all aid to agriculture.³⁴ Women should be part of the design and decisions of development resource flows to support gender equality. Allocation of resources, development assistance and financing mechanisms that are being designed, i.e., the voluntary carbon trading schemes, migrant's remittances for rural development, should ensure to support projects that promote gender equity and rural development.

C. Address the capacity of local rural institutions to address rural women and girl's needs, particularly women farmers, through training

67. The capacity to address rural women and girls needs, in particular women farmers, by Rural institutions, such as agriculture extension, cooperatives, rural financing institutions, decentralised government and local authorities, local community based organizations, NGOs and others, should be ensured. Some capacity building initiatives can include:

- i. Agriculture extension service needs reorientation to make it gender neutral. More women extension workers need to be recruited.
- ii. Use training of trainers as a way to involve higher level professional staff in learning and teaching participatory and gender analysis approaches.
- iii. Provide training for women's groups in negotiating and group development skills and support their organisations.
- iv. Promote links with policy makers, planners, and managers by inviting them to participate in discussions of implications of project results for planning
- v. Training on how to link rural women with high-value agriculture sector, i.e., emerging global supply chains (vegetables, fruit and flowers), expanding supermarket chains.

D. Research and in-depth analysis of gender-differentiated impacts of food insecurity

68. The enhancement of women's participation in addressing food security issues should be starting from an in depth analysis of the different impact that food and poverty has on women

and men at country level. This way, empirical evidence on the actual extent of food insecurity issues could be evaluated and women and men's participation in the achievement of food security could be better enhanced.

E. Gender Audits on Agricultural Policies and Programmes

69. Gender audits of Agricultural Policies and Programmes could provide latest information on the status of gender in agriculture and land sectors. The Audit would also identify the gaps between men and women in these sectors and suggest possible solutions to policy makers on how to bridge the gaps.

F. Collection of gender-disaggregated data on farming technologies

70. There is a need to collect gender disaggregated data to establish who, i.e. men and women, uses what type of farming technologies and machinery in agricultural production.

G. Promotion of Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development (SARD) practices

71. The most viable farming systems such as small-scale and family farms are where women play an important role. They are the most productive for feeding people and at the same time ensure environmental benefits. Several proposals and approaches should be put forward including organic farming, Integrate Permaculture Concepts (the use of ecology as the basis for

designing integrated systems of food production, housing, appropriate technology, and community development), Conservation Agriculture (natural system processes diminishing soil disturbance and land degradation through reduced tillage) and others.

VI. The role that Women Major Group could play

- Mobilize professional women in the field of agriculture and cooperate with regional bodies to help them mainstream gender
- Stimulate institutional linkages and expand women-focused NGOs
- Advocate to increase women's access to labour market in the agricultural sector, reduce job insecurity and improve access to profitable markets
- Identify resource flows and funding mechanisms benefiting women
- Assist in the development of indicators and means to measure, monitor and evaluate the contribution of women to agriculture and rural development, the differential effects of policies and programmes on women's lives, and the impacts of gender mainstreaming on women and their communities
- Encourage role changes, to achieve a greater number of women and girls taking up technical trades while strengthening capacity of professional women in agriculture and NRM
- Build the capacities, knowledge, and skills of women and girls through education, training, information, communication and networking, and the exchange of experiences

- Capacity building in all respective organizations to furnish gender sensitivity
- Help appropriate technology reach women farmers, increase women's involvement in the technology development, encourage skills development
- Help identify new solutions and opportunities for rural women, including technical support and knowledge in agro-forestry, tree-replanting (specifically multi-purpose tree species), biofuel plantation development and extraction as a means of solving desertification.
- Capture women's intrinsically sustainable indigenous knowledge, combining new and old actions that have great potential to positively impact climate change.
- Sensitizing NRM projects and developing women friendly technologies to reduce the impact on NR, and enhance women involvement
- Support fora where particularly rural women can share their experiences with others
- Support women working in conflict-prone areas and provide technical support in bridging rehabilitation activities of women to development activities through assessment missions that will help identify priority needs for gender mainstreaming and policy making.

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