

UN CSD 16, Women's Major Group Statement

8 May 2008

Thematic Discussions: Drought and Desertification 10:00-1:00

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The burden of drought disproportionately lies more on women as men have to leave communities in search of employment. Women then must assume added responsibilities in areas where women do not have equal access to services and [women] are not held as equals in decision making. And-- We all know about the violence women experience that arises from stress and conflict around resource scarcity due to drought conditions.

We therefore recommend that governments and agencies build the capacity for women and mothers to participate in all mitigation and adaptation strategies.

The U.N. Convention to Combat Desertification goes the furthest to support gender mainstreaming and recognizing the role of women in rural livelihoods and food production.

Lessons learned from the International Fund for Agricultural Development projects in marginal lands show that both women and men benefit from a gender approach that ensures women are involved in all levels of dry land activities.

Women and their organizations have proven to be effective vehicles for improving food security and community based management of natural resources which is crucial to adaptation, mitigation recovery of drought impacted areas.

Women also hold important knowledge and understanding of the local environment (ecology) plants, water sources, and soil conditions.

Women need to be supported in access to land use and tenure, agricultural extension services, financial mechanisms and women need to be beneficiaries of carbon credit schemes.

Finally, governments and agencies can and must scale up youth programs—programs that include the girl child -- and programs that specifically train youth in ecological systems services and agricultural that speaks to local land ecology.