

Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-fifth session
22 February – 4 March 2011

Panel discussion
The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger
eradication, development and current challenges

Thursday, 24 February 2011, 1:15 – 2:45 p.m.

Panellists

Ms. Emma Siliprandi is a researcher based at the Center for Food Research (NEPA) at Universidade Estadual de Campinas in Brazil. She has collaborated with the Ministries of Agrarian Development and Food Security in Brazil and various United Nations agencies on rural and agricultural policies and technical coordination programmes, including for rural women and food security. She has also led and worked with civil society networks and organizations. Ms. Siliprandi holds a PhD in Sustainable Development and a Master's Degree in Rural Sociology. She has published widely and is on the editorial board of two scientific journals.

Ms. Marzia Fontana is a development economist with over 15 years of research and teaching experience in the area of gender, labour markets, unpaid work and inequalities. She is currently a Research Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK and Director of its MA Gender and Development programme. She has published extensively on issues related to gender and international trade. Ms. Fontana has collaborated with FAO, IFAD and ILO in examining the gender dimensions of rural employment and is one of the main authors of the recently published report *Gender Dimensions of Agricultural and Rural Employment: Differentiated Pathways out of Poverty*.

Ms. Godavari Dange is Secretary of the Sakhi Federation, a federation of savings and credit groups with more than 500 member groups spread over 110 villages based in Maharashtra, India. She is a key leader in helping her network analyze and take strategic action to combat food insecurity. She has been responsible for facilitating community access to poverty reduction, housing, basic services and livelihood programmes and in advancing community health priorities. Ms. Dange has presented the accomplishments of her federation at national and global peer learning exchanges, and international conferences. She is representing GROOTS International, a member network of the Huairou Commission.

Ms. Marcela Villarreal is Director of the Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO). Since she joined the Organization in 1996, she has been Director of the Gender and Population Division, Chief of the Population and Development Service and Chief of the Gender and Development Service. Before joining FAO, she worked for UNFPA, ILO, Regional

Employment Programme in Santiago (Chile), and for the Colombian Government. She has worked and published extensively in the areas of poverty reduction, gender issues, rural development, employment, social inequality, HIV/AIDS and food security and gender issues, *inter alia*. She has led and/or participated in missions to some 40 countries.