

April 2012



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TWENTY-EIGHTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR EUROPE

Baku, Azerbaijan, 19 and 20 April 2012

Agenda Item 8

Report from the outcome of the debate of the 37th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) on “Women in Agriculture – Closing the Gender Gap for Development in Europe. The Activities of the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development”

1. The Secretariat presented the results of extensive research on the socio-economic status of rural women and men in the Region and acknowledged the constraints on providing a comprehensive analysis due to the lack of sex-disaggregated data in the agricultural sector. A brief report on the activities of the FAO/ECA Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development (WPW) in the 2010–11 biennium was also included. It was noted that the gender gap refers to the unequal access to assets, resources, and opportunities in addition to the unequal access to legal recourse and to the existence of discriminatory pay practices.
2. The Commission expressed support for FAO's proposed core set of gender indicators in agriculture. Furthermore, it was recommended to increase the visibility of the WPW and urged governments to increase self-financing of participatory activities in the Working Party. Gender-specific indicators and targets should be established in formulating and assessing policies, programmes and projects.
3. The Commission:
 - a. Noted that, in line with the findings of the FAO State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) 2010-11 report, closing the gender gap in agriculture may raise yields significantly, and thus contribute to poverty alleviation; however the general lack of sex-disaggregated data in agriculture hinders the full understanding of the status of rural populations.
 - b. Urged member countries to cooperate with the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) on awareness-raising and capacity development in the ministries of agriculture and national statistical offices in the field of sex-disaggregated data.

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- c. Within the framework of revitalizing the FAO/ECA Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development, urged member countries to further review and discuss the proposals of:
- the creation of a National Gender Focal Point in the ministry or relevant national institution;
 - the revised roles and responsibilities of the Board and Secretariat of the WPW; and
 - a new name for the WPW.
4. Civil society highlighted the fact that women globally produce more than half of the food, yet are the majority of the undernourished. It was pointed out that this is a direct result of the lack of institutional support for smallholder farms. It was also noted that women lagged behind in all but one Millennium Development Goal.