



World
Rural
Women's
Day

International
Federation of
Agricultural
Producers



PRESS RELEASE

October 15 – World Rural Women's Day

Rural Women, generators of a future for all

Paris, October 15 2006 – On this World Rural Women's Day 2006, all over the world today, women farmers are working to develop the necessary strategies which will allow rural women to become the leaders of tomorrow. « Is it enough to politely ask current leaders, usually males and from urban origins, to take into account the needs of rural women? Obviously not! It is up to us, rural women from all continents, to assume our responsibilities right to the end. We have no choice; we must show the way, by becoming the leaders of tomorrow. Let us become the creators of a future for all! » that is the message sent out in solidarity by the women farmers of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP).

In spite of improvements in women's representation in decision-making processes, they are always under-represented in every country in the world. This under-representation also includes rural areas. The insufficient representation and the lack of understanding for their claims, such as access to the land, to credits, to seeds, to working tools and even to the recognition of the essential role they play in agriculture, work against the full development of rural communities. That is why the Chair of IFAP's Committee on Women in Agriculture, Mrs. Karen Serres, is encouraging rural women to take their place in the community and within farmers' organizations and to work towards getting the necessary tools which will enable them to get there. « We need rural women leaders so we can reach greater balance and equity in society» she stated.

Within the framework of the World Rural Women's Day 2006, IFAP has developed recommendations addressed to rural women, to governments and farmers organizations in five essential areas - identity, dialogue, information, independence and sphere of influence – to help them overcome obstacles and acquire the recognition and the status they deserve. Several combined steps must be taken: training and financial support programs must be made available; legislation promoting parity within decision-making bodies must be enacted, without neglecting awareness-raising campaigns. Rural women, on their part, must be able to enter into partnerships, to develop networks and to create cooperation links to become stronger and better organized.

Rural women, governments and farmers organizations have a role to play in the implementation of all recommended strategies. They all have a part to play in empowering rural women, our little known leaders of today, so they can become the recognized leaders of tomorrow. Our actions today will pave the way for a new future.

Under this year's theme: « Rural Women: Leaders of Tomorrow », this celebration aims at reminding populations and governments about the reality faced by rural women in the world and that it is absolutely necessary to clearly support them in their activities.

Some figures: According to the FAO, women produce more than 50% of the food cultivated on the planet. In Africa, more than 80% of food is produced by women. It is 60% in Asia and 30 to 40% in South America. The majority of the poor of our planet live in rural areas. 70% of the poor in rural areas are women and their principal resource is agriculture

Note: The WRWD 2006 message from the President of the IFAP Women Farmers Committee and the women farmers' recommendations are available at the following address: www.rural-womens-day.org

- 30 -

IFAP is a world farmers' organisation representing more than 600 million farming families in 115 national organisations and 80 countries. The IFAP *Women Farmers' Committee* is a working group for the development of women's agricultural activities, the recognition of their rights and their representation within agricultural organisations.

Information: Julie Emond, communication co-ordinator, International Federation of Agricultural Producers
Telephone: +33 1 45 26 05 53, Fax: +33 1 48 74 72 12, E-mail: julie.emond@ifap.org Website: www.ifap.org