

World Rural Women's Day 2007



"The right to food: rural women produce and provide"



RECOMMENDATIONS BY RURAL WOMEN

The right to food is a universal right. Everyone should have constant access to a variety of quality food in an amount sufficient to meet the individual's nutritional requirements, free of harmful substances and culturally acceptable; failing this everyone should have the funds to acquire their food.

Government should work with farmers' organizations to ensure the respect of this right for the good of the whole population. Everything should be done to make sure that farmers – men and women – can provide sufficient food for the men, women and children in their country.

Rural women strongly support legislation that encourages farm production so that women farmers can expand their role as providers of healthy food. They are already providing their families with food as well as supplying food to the towns and rural areas.

Specific steps should be taken to support this effort:

- Rural women should have control and financial independence over the fruit of their labour to guarantee continuous supply of high-quality produce that will provide a steady income for the women and their families.
- A woman farmer must be able to own and run a farm with complete financial independence if she wishes to do so.
- Improved marketing of their agricultural produce thanks to appropriate transport and sales infrastructure to provide outlets for their produce at good prices.
- Fair rural development so that farmers can continue to live and support their families in rural areas (roads, schools, rural services, small businesses, and public services)
- Sufficient earnings for agricultural produce so that women farmers can remain in business year to year and make the investments necessary to increase production.

Governments have a major responsibility and rural women must work through their organizations to compel them to honour their commitments.

We must stress repeatedly that women farmers have a direct impact on the right to food of populations as a whole. To meet the populations' nutritional needs more effectively the measures set out above must be complemented by the following:

- Legal recognition of the status of women farmers to facilitate their work and protect them as an independent occupation.
- Ownership of the land so that women farmers can get the best out of it over the long term.
- Access to water and irrigation systems, including small and medium scale irrigation projects.
- Access to loans at affordable rates to provide an environment for every woman farmer that encourages production and investment.
- Initial and in-service training for all women farmers
- Appropriate farm equipment to:
 - Improve the quality and increase the quantity of food produced
 - Make the work easier
 - Open up production in harsh environments
 - Mitigate the damage to the farmer's health

Governments must sustain an environment that feeds the population and should therefore support women farmers in their work by guaranteeing the means of production and sales outlets.

By supporting agricultural production governments are fulfilling one of their main duties: guaranteeing the food security and sustainability of their populations.