Concept note for side event for the 62th session of CSW
“A holistic, integrated approach to accelerate rural women’s empowerment: the JPRWEE case”

Co-organized by: Niger and FAO, IFAD, WFP and UN Women

Tuesday 13 March 2018, from 4:45pm to 6:00pm

Purpose

1. This side event will showcase results and emerging lessons from the Joint Programme on Accelerating Rural Women’s Economic Empowerment (JP RWEE), focusing on the programme’s contribution to rural women’s food security and nutrition, income generation, leadership and, hence, sustainable development. Furthermore, the event will create additional support and commitment for women’s economic empowerment as a key component of the 2030 Agenda to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Background

2. There is increasing evidence that an integrated approach to women’s empowerment in development projects has multiplying effects, making the outcomes of projects more far-reaching and sustainable. This is so due to two main factors. First, women often have more to gain from approaches that focus on life skills such as nutrition education, literacy training, financial education, income generation, entrepreneurship and social empowerment. Second, integrated projects tend to be more efficient, either because they use the same extension system and support network to deliver multiple trainings and inputs, or affecting several aspects of community life through a single intervention.

3. Based on these premises, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme (WFP) and UN Women have established a 5-year results-oriented, collaborative programme “Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women” (JP RWEE). The aim is to respond to the diversity of challenges that rural women face, which go beyond the mandate of any individual UN entity. By bringing together their expertise, resources, experiences and constituencies, the four UN agencies are able to greatly enhance the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of their work to achieve a greater impact on rural women’s lives.

Objectives of the event

4. The key objectives of the side event are to:
   - Present the unique strengths of the Joint Programme RWEE to potential donors and advocate for further support to enable full implementation of planned activities;
   - Highlight how the Joint Programme is empowering rural women as an essential ingredient for reducing rural poverty and promoting sustainable rural development, both in policy and in action.
Expected outcomes
5. The event will:
   i. Promote an increased commitment and action for the JP RWEE from the donor community; and
   ii. Share how a holistic, integrated approach addressing the multiple challenges rural women face can accelerate their empowerment, thus enabling them to contribute up to their full potential to sustainable development.

State supporters and participants
6. The side event will be co-organised by Niger, one of the seven pilot countries of the JP RWEE, and the four implementing UN agencies: FAO, IFAD, WFP and UN Women.

Format
7. The side event will be a moderated session focused on the Joint Programme and its contribution to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls. This will include:
   • An opening statement by the Minister of Women’s Promotions and Child Protection of Niger, outlining the key role of national governments in guidance and implementation;
   • An overview of the Joint Programme’s implementation, progress, and key programming and policy lessons;
   • Presentation of visual materials on the Joint Programme’s main results;
   • A moderated question-and-answer session on country-level implementation experiences, focusing on main results, lessons learned, and implications for policies and programmes; and
   • Closing statement by a representative of one of the Joint Programme’s donors.