

Message 2 for the Empowerment of Rural Women in the World

Why an International Day for Rural Women – 15 October?

During the 4th UN World Conference on Women (Beijing 1995) several NGOs launched a World Rural Women's Day to be celebrated on 15 October in synergy with the 16 October FAO World Food Day.

Such a Day was considered as an effective way of building recognition and support for the estimated 1 billion rural women in the world, whether small farmers, entrepreneurs or laborers, who with scarce resources and extremely restricted access to credit, input, extension services, training and education,

- Produce most of the food in developing countries
- Manage most of the earth's natural resources
- Create many jobs in rural areas
- Care for children and the elderly
- Transmit values and agricultural knowledge, and more.

The Women's World Summit Foundation WWSF spearheaded the global campaign and lobbied governments to make the Day known around the world via its annual **Call to Action** and **“Open Letters to Rural Women of the World”**, choosing a specific theme each year (all published on Internet www.woman.ch)

Dear Sisters,

For thousands of years, you have produced your own food and guaranteed food security for your children and communities. Yes, you help feed the world. Yes, you are central to food security and you are leaders in the movement for “safe food” and safeguarding bio-diversity, but you do not enjoy all your human rights.

The International Day of Rural Women is meant to empower you to claim your rights, especially **your right to development, health and well-being, including food, clothing, housing and medical care, your right to human dignity, quality of life and peace**, all guaranteed by the International Bill of Human Rights.

You have the right and obligation to first ensure the nutritional basis for you and your family. You have a track record of having taken responsibility for food production, management and consumption into your own hands. Eradicating your poverty is a problem of income not just a production problem. You have a right to land and inheritance, to education, information, know-how, to credit and reasonable income for your work. Claim it!

In 2007, the United Nations General Assembly declared the NGO World Day initiative as a UN Resolution Day - International Day of Rural Women - 15 October (A/Res/42/136/2007). An annual Message by the UN Secretary-General to all Member States stresses that “you are pivotal to addressing hunger, malnutrition and poverty; that investing in you will benefit all and help eliminate discrimination against you in law and in practice. Despite the heavy responsibility you shoulder, you lack equal access to opportunities and resources. This hampers

your advancement and holds all people back. More than 100 million people could be lifted out of poverty if you had the same access to productive resources as men, according to FAO. Productivity on your farms would increase up to 30 per cent and the number of hungry people would drop by as much as 17 per cent – an impact that translates into improvements for as many as 150 million individuals. You are key for sustainable development – one of the imperatives for the 21st century”.

Thank You and let’s give you credit where it’s due.

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Endorsements:

The African Commission of Health and Human Rights - CAPSDH
International Movement for Fraternal Union Among Races and Peoples
The Lama Gangchen World Peace Foundation - LGWPF
OCAPROCE International
Women of Spirit and Faith