



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF RURAL WOMEN & WORLD FOOD DAY 2018

A public statement from the Associated Country Women of the World

In March 2018, the Associated Country Women of the World and a coalition of partner organisations including the World Association of Industrial and Technological Research Organisations, Soroptomist International, the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, and BPW International, launched the Global Survey of the Living Conditions of Rural Women.

This Survey seeks to gather the input of women in rural communities all over the world and to frame responses in a format which will inform those who make policy and funding decisions which affect the lives of these women. We know that almost every situation which impacts on the lives of women does so more negatively on those women living in rural areas, or who have been raised in rural communities and who are now living elsewhere.

From the earliest responses to the Survey, we are seeing that the negative impacts of forced urbanisation, rural to urban migration amongst young people, and the affects of climate change are the biggest challenges for these women and their families. This reinforces the significance of issues that ACWW Member Societies and our colleagues globally have been raising awareness of for many years.

Around the world, women represent around 43% of the agricultural workforce, which highlights their position and importance as relating to food security and community resources. Despite this, women continue to suffer from discriminatory practices and policies, with reduced access to land rights, finance, water, energy, technology, education, and appropriate support and infrastructure.

Supporting women in the development and implementation of climate-resilient agricultural practices and systems must be a priority. ACWW has made interventions on these issues with the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, and national governments, at meetings including the 2nd Eurasian Women's Forum held in St Petersburg, Russia, in September 2018.

When women have equality of access to land, inheritance rights, and agricultural processes, the world will benefit. Management of climate change, food security, and gender equality are inextricably linked, and must be tackled in a cohesive way if we are truly to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Women in rural communities remain lowest in the chain of benefit, and yet are responsible for the foundation on which these systems are built. We must do more to support, elevate the voice of, and recognise the importance of, rural women and their critical role in food security and the everyday lives of every person everywhere.

Ruth Shanks AM
ACWW World President

NOTES

The UN Resolution Adopting 15 October as International Day of Rural Women - <http://undocs.org/A/RES/62/136>
International Day of Rural Women - <http://www.un.org/en/events/ruralwomensday/>
World Food Day - <http://www.fao.org/world-food-day>

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