



AHG OF INGOs
Representatives to FAO in Rome

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Federation Internationale des Femmes des carrières juridiques



Agricultural and rural development are considered as most important part for eradicating poverty and hunger. But to eradicate hunger and poverty, food production and rural development are impacted by national and local policies.

As African women play a major role in agricultural production and in local food security, it appears that involvement of women in decision-making process and their access to resources as means for achieving sustainable development, must be realized with respect to the adoption of the Protocol of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights related to Women's Rights.

Most African States have considered Agriculture as backbone of their economies and have acknowledged the significant role of Women in the Agricultural Sector.

In spite of all considerations regarding women and their role in Agriculture, they are still deprived from the right to equal treatment with men, including equal opportunities in political, economic and social activities. In facts, they produce about half of the world's food but they own only about two percent of all land.

At FAO, these issues are studied. Mrs Marcela Villarreal, Director of Gender and Population Division, recently explained that today's economic development rests on the capacity to innovate, to generate knowledge and to adopt technological changes.

The biggest anomaly regarding women in Agriculture is lack of rights to have their own real estate and to manage personally their own property. Landlessness for women means life of poverty. The inability of women to own land has constrained their access to loans and other credit facilities.

Unfortunately many of the fundamental rights are not guaranteed in Constitutions; the women issues need implementation at national level. Often also the women occupying decision-making positions are simply "making a presentation".

There are number of international instruments and conventions put in place by the International community since 1948. These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, CEDAW, ACPHA and the Additional Protocol for Women but also Solemn Declarations of Head of States and Governments and the Beijing's Platform. All these instruments reaffirm the principles of non discrimination and fundamental rights and freedom for human beings.

Besides some advancement in the last Decade, in many countries around the World.

Women's property rights are slightly implemented.

Without a cultural change in the Community, women may be unable to assert their rights because of fear of social isolation and coercion.

I am deeply convinced that our colleagues as legal experts can play a role in ensuring that gender equality prevails in the entire African Continent. Without women, the big transformation of Society and implementation of important projects cannot be realized.

Especially referring to several proposals of Law Reform, we must recognize the Vital role of African Women Lawyer Association; its efforts are enormous and members continue their mission in spite of terrible difficulties and personal sacrifice.

Antonietta Cescut