CAMEROON - WOMEN CALL FOR LAND & INHERITANCE RIGHTS

CAMEROON - Women produce 80% of food in rural communities YET own only 2% of the land and benefit only 5% of the total agricultural inputs. Women access to land depends on their relationship with men: either as husbands, fathers, brothers or male relatives.

The inability of women to freely access and control productive resources, places them at a weaker position in terms of: agricultural productivity and economic growth, food security, family income, multiple livelihood strategies and equal participation in governance. All these are set backs to an emerging economy like Cameroon. Cameroon - Gender Equality Advocacy Network (GEADNET) Cameroon makes a clarion call for custodians of land & traditions to respect women’s land rights and inheritance. Policy makers must enforce the rule of law and civil society organizations need to continue to pursue government for gender sensitive land reforms.

The International Rural Women’s Day, October 15th has been set aside to commemorate the laudable contributions rural women make to the livelihoods of their families, communities and countries in general. The 2011 theme is “Rural women claim your rights to land ownership and inheritance”. Land is a fundamental resource for agricultural and economic production and productivity of a country.

Land acquisition in Cameroon is through inheritance, purchase and distribution by the state. Unfortunately women are not favored in any of the three. Property and inheritance rights to women remain a serious myth, and manhood is highly valorized with it. Women do not have the purchasing power. State representatives concerned with distribution of land are men who still share it in favor of men. Village and land consultative boards are purely a male affair. Customary laws which discriminate against women land rights override or prevail over statutory laws enshrined with equality of all citizens to land access and ownership.

Women in Action Against Gender Violence Cameroon (WACameroon)

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