This morning at the FAO the VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON THE RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE OF TENURE OF LAND, FISHERIES AND FORESTS IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY was endorsed as one of the point of the FINAL REPORT approved by all Participants.

The other important bullets of this FINAL REPORT - that will be available on the website of the FAO in the next days - are:

1. also if VGGT are voluntary and not legally binding, encouraged all stakeholders to promote, make use of and support the implementation of the VGGT when formulating strategies, policies and programmes on food security, nutrition, agriculture and tenure of land, fisheries and forests.
2. Decided to request the United Nations General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, to further endorse the VGGT and ensure their wide dissemination to all relevant UN Bodies and Agencies.
3. Requested FAO to ensure that VGGT are included as a priority in the new Strategic Framework that FAO is developing and in relevant work programmes.

**All the three main speakers** of the morning, Mr. José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the two men who represented the President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP) underlined as secure tenure rights and equitable access to land are fundamental for the eradication of hunger and poverty.

A responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests improves life of people, contributes to a sustainable development and contributes to develop food security.

But after the endorsement of the VGGT the work is not at the end, because important next steps are ADVOCACY, POLICIES, EXPLANATION, IMPLEMENTATION, INFORMATION.

VGGT represents a key, a milestone in the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and an important goal for the stakeholders, FAO, IFAD, WFP, Member States, Civil Society, International Organisations.

**Civil Society Organizations** emphasized the importance of the process that was adopted for developing the Guidelines “which allowed representatives of small-scale food producers to participate at all stages including the negotiations, to draw attention to the real-life issues facing them and to make concrete proposals”.

Christina VISCONTI – as Coordinator of the Ad Hoc Group – took the floor at the end of the morning and she will report about this.

The VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES (VGGT) is a revolutionary text because recognise some fundamental principles for rural people and represent also a good and appropriate response to the subject of the recent CSW56 “The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication development and current challenge”.

I would like to underscore only few of the important principles declared:
“States should:

Recognize and respect all legitimate tenure right holders and their rights.
Safeguard legitimate tenure rights against threats and infringements.
Provide access to justice to deal with infringements of legitimate tenure rights.
Prevent tenure disputes, violent conflicts and corruption.

Non-state actors including business enterprises have a responsibility to respect human rights and legitimate tenure rights.

Equity and justice:

Taking positive actions including empowerment, in order to promote equitable tenure rights and access to land, fisheries and forests, for all, women and men, youth and vulnerable and traditionally marginalized people, within the national context.

Gender equality:

States should ensure that women and girls have equal tenure rights and access to land, fisheries and forests independent of their civil and marital status.

Holistic and sustainable approach:

Recognising that natural resources and their uses are interconnected and adopting an integrated and sustainable approach to their administration.

SAFEGUARDS

When States recognize or allocate tenure rights to land, fisheries and forests, they should establish, in accordance with national laws, safeguards to avoid infringing on or extinguishing tenure rights of others, including legitimate tenure rights that are not currently protected by law. In particular, safeguards should protect women and the vulnerable who hold subsidiary tenure rights, such as gathering rights.

States should ensure that women and men enjoy the same rights in the newly recognized tenure rights, and those rights are reflected in records.

POLICY, LEGAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORKS RELATED TO TENURE

States should consider the particular obstacles faced by women and girls with regard to tenure and associated tenure rights, and take measures to ensure that legal and policy frameworks provide adequate protection for women and that laws that recognize women’s tenure rights are implemented and enforced.

States should ensure that women can legally enter into contracts concerning tenure rights on the basis of equality with men and should strive to provide legal services and other assistance to enable women to defend their tenure interests.