



General Assembly

Distr.: General
28 January 2014

Sixty-eighth session
Agenda item 28 (a)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 2013

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/68/449 and Corr.1)]

68/139. Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 56/129 of 19 December 2001, 58/146 of 22 December 2003, 60/138 of 16 December 2005, 62/136 of 18 December 2007, 64/140 of 18 December 2009 and 66/129 of 19 December 2011,

Affirming the obligation of all States to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and also that all forms of discrimination, including discrimination against women, are contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,¹ the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,² the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,² the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,³ the Convention on the Rights of the Child,⁴ the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities⁵ and other human rights instruments,

Recalling the provisions pertaining to women in rural areas contained in the outcome documents of relevant international conferences and summits, in particular the Beijing Declaration⁶ and Platform for Action⁷ adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”,⁸

* Reissued for technical reasons on 31 March 2014.

¹ Resolution 217 A (III).

² See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 2515, No. 44910.

⁶ *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

⁷ *Ibid.*, annex II.

⁸ Resolution S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.



Recognizing that rural women are critical agents in poverty reduction, that they are crucial to the achievement of food and nutrition security in poor and vulnerable households and to environmental sustainability and that, in other ways, they are also critical to the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals, and concerned that rural women continue to be economically and socially disadvantaged because of their limited access to economic resources and opportunities, their limited or lack of access to land, water and other resources, their limited or lack of access to credit, extension services and agricultural inputs, their exclusion from planning and decision-making and their disproportionate burden of unpaid care work,

Recognizing also the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security⁹ endorsed in May 2012 by the Committee on World Food Security, which embrace gender equality as one of the main guiding principles of implementation in order to help address the ongoing disparities with regard to land,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;¹⁰

2. *Urges* Member States, in collaboration with the organizations of the United Nations system, and civil society, as appropriate, to continue their efforts to implement the outcome of and to ensure an integrated and coordinated follow-up to the relevant United Nations conferences and summits, including their reviews, and to attach greater importance to the improvement of the situation of rural women, including indigenous women, in their national, regional and global development strategies by, inter alia:

(a) Creating an enabling environment for improving the situation of rural women and ensuring systematic attention to their needs, priorities and contributions, including through enhanced cooperation and a gender perspective, and their full participation in the development, implementation and follow-up of macroeconomic policies, including development policies and programmes and poverty eradication strategies, including poverty reduction strategy papers, where they exist, based on the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”;¹¹

(b) Pursuing the political and socioeconomic empowerment of rural women and supporting their full and equal participation in decision-making at all levels, including through affirmative action, where appropriate, and support for women’s and farmers’ organizations in which smallholder women farmers are members, labour unions or other associations and civil society groups promoting rural women’s rights;

(c) Promoting consultation with and the participation of rural women, including indigenous women, women with disabilities and older women, through their organizations and networks, in the design, development and implementation of gender equality and rural development programmes and strategies;

(d) Ensuring that perspectives of rural women are taken into account and that they participate in the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of policies and activities related to emergencies, including natural disasters, humanitarian

⁹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, document CL 144/9 (C 2013/20), appendix D.

¹⁰ A/68/179.

¹¹ Resolution 66/288, annex.

assistance, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, and taking appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against rural women in this regard;

(e) Integrating a gender perspective into the design, implementation and evaluation of and follow-up to development policies and programmes, including budget policies, paying increased attention to the needs of rural women so as to ensure that they benefit from policies and programmes adopted in all spheres and that the disproportionate number of rural women living in poverty is reduced;

(f) Mainstreaming gender considerations in the governance of natural resources, leveraging the participation and influence of women in managing the sustainable use of natural resources, and enhancing the capacities of Governments, civil society and development partners to better understand and address gender issues in the management and governance of natural resources;

(g) Strengthening measures, including resource generation, to accelerate progress towards the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 5 on improving maternal health by addressing the specific health and nutrition needs of rural women and taking concrete measures to enhance and provide access to the highest attainable standards of health for women in rural areas, as well as quality, affordable and universally accessible primary health care and support services, including in such areas of sexual and reproductive health as prenatal and postnatal health care, emergency obstetric care, family planning information and increasing knowledge, awareness and support for the prevention of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, and by promoting and protecting their reproductive rights in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,¹² the Beijing Platform for Action⁷ and their review outcomes;

(h) Promoting sustainable infrastructure, access to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation and safe cooking and heating practices to improve the health and nutrition of rural women and children;

(i) Investing in and strengthening efforts to meet the basic needs of rural women, including needs relating to their food and nutrition security and that of their families, and to promote adequate standards of living for them as well as decent conditions for work and access to local, regional and global markets through improved availability, access to and use of critical rural infrastructure, such as energy and transport, science and technology, local services, capacity-building and human resources development measures and the provision of a safe and reliable water supply and sanitation, nutritional programmes, affordable housing programmes, education and literacy programmes and health and social support measures, including in the areas of sexual and reproductive health, reproductive rights, in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and their review outcomes, HIV prevention, treatment, care, including psychosocial aspects, and support services;

(j) Designing and implementing national policies and legal frameworks that promote and protect the enjoyment by rural women and girls of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and creating an environment that does not tolerate violations

¹² *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5–13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

or abuses of their rights, including domestic violence, sexual violence and all other forms of gender-based violence;

(k) Ensuring that the rights of older women in rural areas are taken into account with regard to their equal access to basic social services, appropriate social protection/social security measures, equal access to and control of economic resources and their empowerment through access to financial and infrastructure services, with special focus on the provision of support to older women, including indigenous women, who often have access to few resources and are more vulnerable;

(l) Valuing and supporting the critical role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women in rural areas, in the conservation and sustainable use of traditional crops and biodiversity for present and future generations as an essential contribution to food and nutrition security;

(m) Promoting the rights of women and girls with disabilities in rural areas, including by ensuring access on an equal basis to productive employment and decent work, economic and financial resources and disability-sensitive infrastructure and services, in particular in relation to health and education, as well as by ensuring that their priorities and needs are fully incorporated into policies and programmes, inter alia, through their participation in decision-making processes;

(n) Developing specific assistance programmes and advisory services to promote economic skills of rural women in banking, modern trading and financial procedures and providing microcredit and other financial and business services to a greater number of women in rural areas, in particular female heads of households, for their economic empowerment;

(o) Supporting women entrepreneurs and women smallholder farmers, including those in subsistence farming, by facilitating their access to extension and financial services, agricultural inputs and land, water sanitation and irrigation, markets and innovative technologies;

(p) Mobilizing resources, including at the national level and through official development assistance, for increasing women's access to existing savings and credit schemes, as well as targeted programmes that provide women with capital, knowledge and tools that enhance their economic capacities;

(q) Ensuring and improving equal access for rural women to employment in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, supporting and promoting opportunities in small enterprises, sustainable social enterprises and cooperatives and improving working conditions;

(r) Investing in infrastructure and in time- and labour-saving technologies, especially in rural areas, benefiting women and girls by reducing their burden of domestic activities, affording the opportunity for girls to attend school and for women to engage in self-employment or to participate in the labour market;

(s) Taking steps to ensure that women's unpaid work and contributions to on-farm and off-farm production, including income generated in the informal sector, are recognized, supporting remunerative non-agricultural employment of rural women, improving working conditions, increasing access to productive resources and recognizing that women's full integration into the formal economy is essential in order to address the structural and underlying causes of the difficult conditions of rural women;

(t) Promoting programmes and services to enable rural women and men to reconcile their work and family responsibilities and to encourage men to share, equally with women, household, childcare and other care responsibilities;

(u) Developing strategies to decrease women's vulnerability to environmental factors while promoting rural women's role in protecting the environment;

(v) Considering the adoption, where appropriate, of national legislation to protect the knowledge, innovations and practices of women in indigenous and local communities relating to traditional medicines, biodiversity and indigenous technologies;

(w) Addressing the lack of timely, reliable data disaggregated by sex and age, including by intensifying efforts to include women's unpaid work in official statistics, and developing a systematic and comparative research base on rural women that will inform policy and programme decisions;

(x) Strengthening the capacity of national statistical offices to collect, analyse and disseminate comparable data disaggregated by sex and age, including on time use, and gender statistics in rural areas to serve as a basis for gender-responsive policy design and strategy development in rural areas;

(y) Designing, revising and implementing laws to ensure that rural women are accorded full and equal rights to own and lease land and other property, including through the equal right to inheritance, and undertaking administrative reforms and all necessary measures to give women the same right as men to credit, capital, appropriate technologies and access to markets and information, and to ensure their equal access to justice and legal support;

(z) Supporting a gender-sensitive education system that considers the specific needs of rural women in order to eliminate gender stereotypes and discriminatory tendencies affecting them, including through community-based dialogue involving women and men and girls and boys;

(aa) Promoting education, training and relevant information programmes for rural and farming women through the use of affordable and appropriate technologies and the mass media, and taking concrete measures to improve rural women's skills, productivity and employment opportunities through technical, agricultural and vocational education and training;

3. *Encourages* Member States, United Nations entities and all other relevant stakeholders to promote access to social protection for female-headed rural households;

4. *Requests* the relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, in particular those dealing with issues of development, to address and support the empowerment of rural women and their specific needs in their programmes and strategies;

5. *Stresses* the need to identify the best practices for ensuring that rural women have access to and full participation in the area of information and communications technology, to address the priorities and needs of rural women and girls as active users of information and to ensure their participation in developing and implementing global, regional and national information and communications technology strategies, taking appropriate educational measures to eliminate gender stereotypes regarding women in the field of technology;

6. *Calls upon* Member States to consider the concluding observations and recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women concerning their reports to the Committee when formulating policies and designing programmes focused on the improvement of the situation of rural women, including those to be developed and implemented in cooperation with relevant international organizations;

7. *Invites* Governments to promote the economic empowerment of rural women, including through entrepreneurship training, and to adopt gender-responsive rural development strategies, including budget framework and relevant assessment measures, as well as to ensure that the needs and priorities of rural women and girls are systematically addressed and that they can effectively contribute to poverty alleviation, hunger eradication and food and nutrition security;

8. *Encourages* Governments and international organizations to implement the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012,¹¹ with a view to accelerating progress on gender equality and women's empowerment in rural areas, and to ensure that the discussions concerning the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda take into account gender equality as well as the empowerment of rural women;

9. *Invites* the Commission on the Status of Women to give consideration to the issue of the empowerment of rural women in a timely and appropriate manner;

10. *Invites* Governments, relevant international organizations and the specialized agencies to continue to observe the International Day of Rural Women annually, on 15 October, as proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution [62/136](#), and to address rural women's concerns and contributions in celebrating the International Year of Family Farming, 2014;¹³

11. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its seventieth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

*70th plenary meeting
18 December 2013*

¹³ See resolution 66/222.