

CFS Forum on Women's Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition Chair's Summary and Draft Outcomes Private Sector Mechanism comments

The PSM welcomes the summary and outcomes of the forum, and considers women's empowerment to be an essential component of policies and programmes aiming to improve food security and nutritional outcomes. We are therefore extremely pleased to see the increased attention this issue has garnered in the context of the CFS, and fully support the emphasis placed in the outcomes on the importance of mainstreaming gender equality, women's and girls' rights, and women's empowerment in all CFS workstreams, products, and documents, particularly given the importance afforded to this throughout the Agenda 2030, both as a stand alone goal (SDG5), and as a common thread throughout the SDGs as a whole.

However we note with concern the dearth of specific practical recommendations among the outcomes of the Forum, particularly in light of the fact that extant CFS instruments geared towards women's empowerment also generally omit this type of recommendation, which can have an impact on the ground level. Taking this into account, the PSM would like to take this opportunity to draw attention to several themes that, despite their key importance to questions of women's empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition, may not have received sufficient notice in the course of the forum:

- The importance of **increased programming in extension services** geared towards women agricultural producers.
- The lack of **knowledge and training** related to improved production techniques are important barriers to the ability of women to improve their livelihoods and contribute to the greatest extent possible to improved food security and nutrition.
- It also includes the importance of **access to inputs**. We note that women farmers typically achieve yields that are 20-30% lower than men. However, the vast majority of studies have found that differences in yields between men and women exist not because women are less skilled but because they have less access to inputs such as improved seeds, fertilizers and equipment. Just giving women the same access as men to agricultural resources could increase production on women's farms in developing countries by 20 to 30 percent. This could raise total agricultural production in developing countries by 2.5 to 4 percent, which could in turn reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12 to 17 percent, or 100 to 150 million people.

Finally, we regret that not all panelists were able to participate on the actual day of the forum. The continued challenges with visas preventing women farmers from coming to Rome to speak directly at CFS are clear examples of some of the basic impediments that hinder the voice of women in agriculture from being heard. Our PSM nominee, Ms Cesarie Kantarama, a female smallholder farmer from Rwanda, Regional Vice-President of the East African Farmers Federation (EAFF) attempted twice to board her plane to attend the forum and was rejected.