



STATEMENT BY

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on the occasion of

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“Rural women and girls building climate resilience”

Rural women are an indisputable force behind efforts to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity all over the world, and as such they are critical players in building climate resilience. With one in three employed women working in agricultural production, women face the impacts of biodiversity loss and climate change on a daily basis and play an outsize role in building and maintaining their communities’ ability to cope with stresses and shocks from environmental disasters and degradation.

Thanks to their knowledge, on-the-ground experience and range of responsibilities, rural women and girls have tremendous potential to contribute to more sustainable, effective and practical solutions to biodiversity loss and climate change. With dedicated support to advance their leadership and increase their opportunities, rural women and girls can realize this potential and build a more resilient future for themselves, their communities and their environments.

The agriculture sector in developing countries has been significantly affected by climate-related disasters in recent years, which has considerable consequences for the food security and productive potential of rural women and girls. Ensuring that these women and girls have the capacity and opportunity to contribute to strengthening knowledge and applying viable measures to build resilience is a critical part of the equation.

In Latin America alone, 58 million women live in rural areas. Yet only 30 per cent of these women own agricultural land, and less than 5 per cent have access to technical assistance.



Support is needed to create change for rural women and the communities and landscapes of which they are a part. Globally, on every gender and development indicator for which data are available, rural women fare worse than urban dwellers and worse than rural men. Rural women disproportionately experience poverty and face systemic discrimination in accessing land and natural resources. Very often, their voices and views are not often reflected in decision-making processes, preventing them from contributing their full potential as problem solvers for climate change.

Regional, national and local biodiversity and climate change policies need to put a focus on gender issues to reduce the inequalities rural women face. And rural women must be part of this process. Our 2050 Vision of Living in Harmony with Nature emphasizes the need for biodiversity to be valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, to deliver benefits for all. This requires the recognition of the essential role and the effective engagement of all actors, including the most marginalized, such as rural women.

The development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework over the next 12 months is an opportunity and a call to action – for Parties and partners to engage with rural women, and other critical yet often excluded players, and to ensure their voices are heard and their concerns addressed. Going forward, we all need to consider how we can do better in meeting the challenges and making the choices for conserving, sustainably using and equitably sharing the benefits of biodiversity – day to day and for the years to come.
