



Statement by Elizabeth Maruma Mrema
Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity
on the occasion of the
International Day of Rural Women

Rural Women Cultivating Good Food for All

This international day recognizes “the critical role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women, in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security and eradicating rural poverty.”

Rural and indigenous women around the world are key actors in ensuring food security, playing principal but undervalued and overlooked roles in agriculture, and taking on primary responsibilities for family nutrition.

Supporting rural women’s influence and role in decision-making and leadership in the food system, at household, community and higher levels, has the potential to yield multiple benefits.

Increasing women’s opportunities for land ownership has been shown to result in better outcomes for nutrition, livelihoods, well-being and resilience. At the community level, women’s participation in community groups further strengthens resilience and increases access to vital resources such as land and labour, while helping to build and support social networks.

The first draft of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework includes a target addressing the need to ensure benefits, including nutrition, food security, medicines and livelihoods for people, especially the most vulnerable. Rural and indigenous women have a critical role to play in realizing such benefits, for themselves, their communities and the larger food system.

The draft outline of the gender plan of action for the post-2020 period highlights the specific need for attention to and engagement of indigenous and rural women and girls, in recognition of their critical roles in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, and the disproportionate levels of poverty and exclusion that they face.

In honour of this International Day of Rural Women, let’s come together to plan and put in place measures to support rural women in gaining a larger voice in decision making processes, to eradicate poverty, and help to ensure sustainable, nutritious food for all.

