



## **Sixth informal joint meeting of the FAO Council, the IFAD Executive Board and the WFP Executive Board 30 November–1 December 2022**

### ***Background document***

#### **Rome-based agency collaboration on gender equality issues**

1. The Rome-based agencies (RBAs) are strongly committed to gender equality and women's empowerment. This is evident from the rich collaboration on knowledge generation, awareness raising, capacity strengthening, advocacy, programming and policy dialogue among the gender teams of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP). The RBAs regularly engage in knowledge exchange, peer support, learning and technical discussions on various topics related to gender equality.
2. With effective support from the gender task force of RBA members, the gender teams of FAO, IFAD and WFP meet every quarter, share a joint annual programme of work and coordinate closely in preparation for major events such as the various meetings of the agencies' governing bodies, the meetings of the Committee on World Food Security, the International Women's Day, the International Day of Rural Women, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence and the annual sessions of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.
3. A report entitled [\*Joint Evaluation on the Collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies\*](#), published in October 2021, found that among the various thematic areas in which the RBAs collaborate, gender is the one in which the most comprehensive collaboration takes place. The report also noted that those efforts are seen globally as reducing overlap, competition and the duplication of efforts in the areas of gender equality, food security and nutrition, and that there is clear evidence of improved inter-agency coordination and common messaging. In addition, the report found strong evidence of joint learning and the building of synergies among the gender-related activities of FAO, IFAD and WFP, including through regular meetings and joint initiatives and events, joint work in support of country programmes, and the RBAs' joint peer review process with regard to the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, which monitors against 17 gender indicators and stimulates dialogue about strengths and weaknesses.

4. Key highlights of ongoing RBA collaboration on gender equality and women's empowerment include the following.

#### **Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (JP RWEE)**

5. With financial support from Norway and Sweden, the JP RWEE brings together FAO, WFP, IFAD and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in a unique collaboration on tackling the barriers to gender equality and the empowerment of rural women in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By working together, the agencies provide holistic and integrated interventions that encompass the social, economic and political aspects of empowerment, thereby creating the necessary enabling environment for securing rural women's livelihoods, rights and resilience to shocks and crises.
6. Through its holistic and integrated approach, the JP RWEE targets a single group of beneficiaries for multiple interventions. For example, activities aimed at enhancing access to productive assets, resources, technologies and services are complemented by interventions that improve women's agricultural expertise, nutritional knowledge and skills in marketing and business development. The programme focuses on enhancing women's confidence in participating in decision making within their households and acting as leaders in their communities and organizations. The JP RWEE is also working with rural men to make them champions of gender equality and is applying gender-transformative approaches that challenge gender-discriminatory norms and practices. In the participating countries, the JP RWEE teams have supported ministries with technical guidance and inputs for key policy processes. This work has included the development and review of gender equality strategies and support for their implementation within ministries of agriculture, and the mainstreaming of gender-responsive planning and budgeting within national agricultural sectors.
7. The JP RWEE has achieved substantial impacts. During its first phase, which was implemented in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, the Niger and Rwanda from 2014 to 2021, the programme reached a total of about 65,000 female and 15,000 male beneficiaries. Women involved in the programme have managed to increase their agricultural production (by an average of 82 percent) and significantly improve the nutrition of their families. The total income that the women have generated from livelihoods activities has exceeded USD 3.6 million, with more than USD 1.9 million mobilized through savings and loan schemes. As a result, JP RWEE participants have gained self-confidence and are increasingly able to obtain credit, start their own enterprises and influence decisions in their households, communities and organizations.
8. The current phase of the JP RWEE (April 2022 to March 2027) is focused on Nepal, the Niger, Tunisia, the United Republic of Tanzania and the Pacific islands and is expected to reach approximately 46,000 direct beneficiaries. Two cross-cutting lenses are being applied to deepen and strengthen the impact of the programme: a gender-transformative lens aimed at addressing unequal power dynamics and discriminatory social norms in order to foster gender-transformative change at the household, organization, community and policy levels; and a resilience lens aimed at enabling rural women and their households to anticipate, adapt to and respond to agriculture-related hazards and shocks.

#### **Joint programme on gender-transformative approaches to food security and nutrition (JP GTA)**

9. The JP GTA was launched in 2019 and is being implemented by FAO, IFAD and WFP in collaboration with, and with financial support from, the European Union. Acknowledging that conventional gender-sensitive methodologies have certain limitations, the JP GTA aims to contribute to the elimination of hunger by addressing the root causes of gender

inequalities and embedding innovative gender-transformative approaches in the policy dialogues, programmes and projects, working modalities and institutional culture of the RBAs and their partners.

10. In recent years, the JP GTA has made strong progress in generating knowledge on gender-transformative approaches, with highlights that include the development of a common theory of change for gender-transformative programming, a compendium of good practices showcasing successful examples of gender-transformative approaches, and a guidance document for use by the RBAs and their partners on how to measure changes in gendered social norms in the context of food security and nutrition. At the country level, the JP GTA is operating in Ecuador and Malawi, where it seeks to build capacity for gender-transformative approaches, collaborate with partners on gathering data on social norms, implement gender-transformative methodologies for food security and nutrition and foster in-country RBA collaboration.
11. The JP GTA has become a key platform for sharing knowledge on and developing capacity for gender-transformative approaches within the RBAs. In addition to regular webinars, consultations and training sessions that raise awareness about the relevance of gender-transformative approaches, and a guidance document for use by the RBAs and partners on how to measure changes in gendered social norms in the context of food security and nutrition, a five-week series of workshops on social norms was organized in May and June 2021 to introduce about 40 headquarters- and field-based staff from FAO, IFAD, WFP and European Union delegations in 20 countries to concepts and tools for integrating norm-shifting interventions into food security and nutrition programming.
12. Since its creation, the JP GTA has intensified RBA collaboration through strong programme coordination mechanisms, in-depth consultations, extensive cooperation on training and other events and the production of joint publications and information materials. By working together and building synergies that combine their knowledge, experience and tools, the RBAs are demonstrating that inter-agency collaboration is key to the achievement of more sustainable impacts on food security, nutrition and gender equality, thus furthering the RBAs' collective contribution to SDGs 2 and 5.

#### **Coalition on making food systems work for women and girls**

13. FAO, IFAD and WFP were actively engaged in the 2021 United Nations food systems summit through their support for regional dialogues and action tracks that promote gender-transformative solutions. During the summit process, many propositions emerged for addressing the challenges and opportunities facing women and girls in food systems. These were subsequently consolidated into a single agenda for action and a proposal for the creation of a coalition for action on making food systems work for women and girls. The RBAs fostered the creation of the coalition in close collaboration with various food systems summit working groups, Member States and other partners and supporters of gender equality and women's empowerment in food systems.
14. Currently, the RBAs are leading the coalition, together with UN-Women, the International Food Policy Research Institute, the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, the Self Employed Women's Association and the United States Agency for International Development. The coalition operates through four working groups on national gender-responsive food system policies, equity and inclusion in food system organizations and institutions (Global Food 50/50), a gender-transformative finance alliance, and advancing gender-transformative approaches. Each RBA contributes to the various working groups based on its comparative advantage and institutional capacity, thereby facilitating a more holistic approach. The RBAs are also working jointly in several target countries to support the realization of gender-transformative solutions, as envisaged in the respective national food system transformation pathways of those countries.