



Associated Country Women of the World

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Oral Statement for CSW62

Presented by the Associated Country Women of the World on behalf of the undersigned non-governmental organisations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council to the participants of the 62nd Commission the Status of Women.

We welcome the CSW62 theme examining challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls, particularly in a period of increasing challenges for these most vulnerable members of our societies. With one third of women globally having suffered physical or sexual violence, and campaigns for equality not yet overcoming the challenges of populism, engrained sexism and societal injustice, we must work harder, and faster, to improve the living conditions of rural women.

Rural women are disproportionately affected by the darkest actions of humanity, whether this is in time of war or peace, and those from rural communities who flee conflict are at even greater risk. Whilst it is recognised that these women are being 'left behind', there has not yet been enough done to ensure that their voices are heard.

The view that rural women are one homogenous group is a false narrative as, whilst they may face many similar and consistent challenges, additional considerations must include their traditions and ethnicity, social standing, sexual rights, freedom and safety, religious freedoms, environmental considerations and respective locations. Grouping all rural women as one is not only erroneous, but dangerous, and we risk further marginalising those in greatest jeopardy from the frequent and significant shifts in global development.

It is with this in mind that the Associated Country Women of the World, in collaboration with the World Organisation of Industrial and Technological Research Organisations, is convening the International Forum on Rural Women. This body, a network of organisations around the world in more than 100 countries, is uniquely poised to reach women in rural communities and advocate for their needs. We are pleased to announce that on March 15th 2018, we will launch a Global Survey of the Living Conditions of Rural Women. This survey will establish a baseline for continued monitoring and reporting, with the results published and available to all UN bodies, NGOs and partners.

As organisations, we are deeply committed to the Sustainable Development Goals, and the survey results will assist in reporting on the SDG indicators and assessing the impact of policy, funding and publicity priorities in those communities which are hardest to reach.

Information will be gathered on healthcare access, breast-feeding, education, the use of information technology and the internet, birth records, land rights and access to clean water, and safe sanitary facilities. Additional questions will gather data relating to the Zero Hunger Challenge.

We are inviting all delegates to CSW to consider participating in the deployment and execution of this survey and ensuring its successful reporting to UN bodies and partner organisations. Our attendance here is proof of our commitment to collective and collaborative action. Please visit www.ifrw.org.uk for more information, and consider how your organisation might play a role in this initiative.