



Expanding Economic Opportunities for Women Farmers and Entrepreneurs in the Caribbean and the Pacific

Women's Forum, Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA) 2013

Tuesday October 8, 2013

1. Context

Agriculture can be an important engine of growth and poverty reduction and women play a crucial in the growth of the sector through their roles as farmers, labourers and entrepreneurs; However, they face more severe constraints than men in access to productive resources. Efforts by national governments and the international community to achieve their goals for agricultural development, economic growth and food security will be strengthened and accelerated if they build on the contributions that women make and take steps to alleviate these constraints.

Economic development and rising incomes lead to greater demand for high-value commodities, processed products, and pre-prepared foods. In turn, food supply chains become increasingly vertically integrated, linking input suppliers, producers, processors, distributors and retailers. Supermarkets are part of this vertical chain because they are convenient, meet diversifying tastes, and set standards for quality and safety. In this context, various organizations (such as IICA, the US government, IICA, CTA, FAO, IFAD...) are supporting a better integration of women entrepreneurs into agrifood chains.

Women in agriculture and rural areas have less access than men to productive resources and opportunities. Women tend to be the main producers of food while men appear to be managing most of the commercial crops, although not without women's (often unpaid) contributions. Women also participate in commercial farming but within a rather rigid division of tasks. There is evidence of gender-based labour market segmentation: women tend to be clustered in fewer sectors than men and, in agriculture, tend to be mostly involved in subsistence production.

This segmentation suggests that it may be more difficult for women than men to switch to better jobs in new sectors with new economic opportunities. Therefore, it is critical to strengthen the economic opportunities of women through sound agricultural, trade and investment policies as well as capacity building and professional development.

2. Women's Forum at the CWA

The Caribbean Week of Agriculture offers an unique opportunity to raise the issue of economic empowerment of women amongst the policy-makers in the region.

The Forum will discuss the challenges and opportunities in the process of linking the smallholder farmers to the local market as a strategy for improving investment and agricultural growth in the region. It will also discuss strengthening inter-regional linkages in areas including women's

producers and entrepreneurs contribution to food and nutrition security; linking local and regional production to the tourism industry and boosting agro-tourism, and in particular food tourism; sharing lessons in adaptation strategies for increasing resilience to climate change impacts; developing niche markets which add value to indigenous products and build upon local traditions, regional branding and positioning. A part will be devoted to strengthening the existing networks in the region and identify needs for capacity building and training.

In view of strengthening the links between the Caribbean and the Pacific regions, some representatives of the Pacific will be invited to the CWA to share some of their experiences in those areas.

Objectives of the CWA Women's Forum

1. Discuss economic opportunities for women's in the Caribbean and the Pacific
2. Develop an Inter-Regional Action Plan for Caribbean-Pacific collaboration
3. Develop a Caribbean Action Plan for Economic Empowerment of Women
4. Sensitise the Alliance of Ministers of Agriculture and to Pacific ministerial delegations present at the CWA on the specific support needed for women's farmers and entrepreneurs

3. Linking Caribbean and Pacific Women's farmers and entrepreneurs: Building on existing initiatives

The Women's Forum at the CWA will also contribute to the advancement of the Plans of Action developed at the SEED CAP (*Supporting Economic Empowerment and Development in the Caribbean and Pacific*) best practice exchange forum held in Montego Bay, Jamaica in July 2013.

The SEED CAP forum brought together Caribbean and Pacific businesses, producers, experts and public and private sector representatives to discuss how to further strengthen economic gains for women involved in the agriculture and rural sectors. Two Regional Action Plans were developed as outputs of the meeting – one each for the Caribbean and the Pacific, and both with an emphasis on strengthening inter-regional linkages between the two regions, particularly in areas such as:

- Women's contribution to food and nutrition security
- Agrotourism, and in particular food tourism, as an engine for linking women producers and communities with the tourism sectors
- Sharing lessons learned and success stories in adaptation strategies for increasing resilience to Climate Change impacts
- Regional branding and access to niche markets, based on value addition to indigenous products, and incorporation of culture and local traditions.

The Caribbean Action Plan leverages and builds on the existing network of rural women producers known as the Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers CANROP in the Caribbean.

4. Promoting networks and platforms to exchange best practices

Some of the main constraints to expansion of economic opportunities for women is weak governance structures and mechanisms, and the lack of women's professional networks and tools which allow exchange of experience and best practices.

Issues of capacity building, including in financial management, training and education and knowledge management have also been identified as priorities for the strengthening of women's groups and for improving their entrepreneurial development.

AGENDA

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| 8:00 – 8:30 | Registration |
| | Welcome and Opening Remarks <p>Welcome Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Gregg Rawlins, Coordinator, Regional Integration -Caribbean Region & Representative in Trinidad and Tobago</i> • <i>Michael Hailu, Director, CTA</i> • <i>US State Department</i> • <i>Carmen Nurse, President, CANROP</i> • <i>Minister of Agriculture, Pacific Islands</i> <p>Remarks</p> <p><i>Hon. Jennifer Webster, MP, Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Guyana</i></p> |
| 8:30 – 9:30 | Adding Value and Regional Identity through Marketing and Branding <p>This session will focus on strengthening the image of farmers and farming and on success stories in using agriculture, rural experiences, and specialty foods as the basis for regional branding, packaging and marketing. It will also look at the successes in the Pacific Region in achieving national and regional organic certification and niche markets</p> <p>Chair: Ena Harvey, IICA</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The experience of the Organic Blue mountain coffee <i>Dorienne Rowan Campbell, Jamaica</i> • Women Soap Makers and Artisans of Haiti <i>Sylvanie Donne Joseph and Marie Roberte Laurent</i> • Production and Trade of Coconut Oil in Guyana <i>Rosemund Benn, President, Pomeroon Women Agro-Processor Association</i> • <i>Linking small farmers with agribusiness chains</i> <i>Adimaimalaga Fanny Tafunai, Women in Business in Development, Samoa</i> • Integrated Poultry Production and agro-processing in Barbados <i>Deborah Gill, AWIA, Barbados</i> • Branding the Pacific region as organic <i>Karen Mapusua, Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community, SPC, Fiji</i> • Public Organic Certification systems <i>Aina Calafat, Certification expert, Spain</i> |
| 9:30 – 10:45 | |
| 10:45 – 11:00 | DISCUSSION |
| 11: 00 – 11:15 | COFFEE BREAK |
| 11:15 – 12:30 | Green Economies – Niche Markets: Linking production, trade and tourism <p>This session will focus on building business relationships to link to greater markets and stakeholders in tourism (local and regional), supermarket and distributive trade.</p> <p>Chair: Isolina Boto, CTA</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking local production with tourism industry in the Caribbean <i>Gail N. Henry, Sustainable Tourism Industry, Caribbean Tourism Organisation</i> • Promotion of health through improved nutrition systems <i>Karen Fukofuka, Nutrition adviser, Pacific Community Secretariat</i> • Going organic in Dominica: successes and challenges <i>Vanessa Prevost, former president, secretary and executive member, the Dominica Organic Agricultural Movement (DOAM)</i> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successes in raising awareness of local production amongst chefs <i>Robert Oliver, Chef/ Author Ambassador, Pacific Islands Chef</i> • Agrotourism on Cocoa Plantations <i>Alison Godwin, Grande Agro Tourism (T&T), Shadel Nyack-Compton (Grenada)</i> |
| 12:30 – 13:30 | LUNCH Promoting Capacity Building, Networking and Knowledge Sharing This session will focus on success stories of women in agribusiness networks, advocacy tools, market access, technology, access to capital. It will also look at improving financial literacy, investment preparedness and advocacy, as well as tools for information sharing and communication and success stories in communication and knowledge management. |
| 13:30 – 14:30 | Facilitator: <i>Claudius Francis, St Lucia</i> Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chris Addison, Senior expert on Knowledge Management, CTA</i> • <i>Representative from the US State Department</i> • <i>Representative, Finance Alliance for Sustainable Trade (FAST)</i> • <i>Support for Agro processing Development, Carol Tarradath, CARIRI</i> • <i>Representative from CANROP</i> |
| | WORKING GROUP SESSION This session will focus on using the outcomes of the technical sessions to work with the rural women in the Caribbean and the Pacific to develop the following three outputs: |
| 14:30 – 16:30 | Facilitator: <i>Claudius Francis, St Lucia</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Enhanced Caribbean Action Plan • An Inter-Regional Caribbean-Pacific Action Plan • An Executive Summary for Presentation to Alliance Meeting |
| 16:30 – 17:30 | CLOSING SESSION |