



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Investing in rural people



World Food
Programme



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE
WOMAN FARMER
2026

JOINT PROGRAMME:

Accelerating Progress Towards
Rural Women's Economic Empowerment



Linkages between
the **Joint Programme on Rural Women's
Economic Empowerment**

&

the **Voluntary Guidelines on Gender
Equality and Women's and Girls'
Empowerment in the Context of Food
Security and Nutrition**

Background

The denial of women's human rights is one of the major causes of poverty and food insecurity. Persistent gender inequalities continue to undermine progress towards sustainable development, while crises and climate change further exacerbate obstacles faced by women.¹

These gaps are evident in agrifood production, where women still earn 82 cents for every dollar earned by men in agriculture, and the gender gap in land productivity between female- and male-managed farms of the same size is of 24 percent.

However, closing the gender gap in agrifood systems holds immense potential: it could reduce the number of food-insecure people by 45 million.²

The FAO programme for the dissemination and uptake of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition

Endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in 2023, the [Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition \(VG-GEWGE\)](#) offer a comprehensive framework to advance gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment across food systems.

Grounded in human rights and inclusiveness, they guide governments and partners to align policies, legislation, programmes and investments with global commitments on food security, nutrition and gender equality.

For this, they provide a set of cross-cutting as well as specific recommendations around nine focus areas, ranging from access to natural and productive resources, unpaid care and domestic work and other key issues for advancing women's and girls' empowerment.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is committed to the dissemination and implementation of the guidelines' recommendations through a collaborative, sustainable approach.

Accordingly, in January 2025, FAO launched a [programme](#) that fosters synergies with existing initiatives such as the Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (JP RWEE) to maximize impact and promote the uptake of this robust policy instrument.

The FAO programme operates across regional, national, and local levels, ensuring its activities align with specific national priorities and institutional contexts. Core countries of implementation include Colombia, Kenya, Nepal and the United Republic of Tanzania.

The programme is supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Global Affairs Canada, the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, and the Government of France.

What do the VG-GEWGE mean for the JP RWEE?

Jointly implemented by FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the World Food Programme (WFP), and local partners, [JP RWEE](#) supports rural women's livelihoods, rights and resilience.

Operating in six countries—Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, Pacific Islands (Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tonga), the United Republic of Tanzania, and Tunisia—JP RWEE promotes gender-transformative approaches across four outcome areas. These include food security, income and economic autonomy, leadership and participation, and enabling gender-responsive policy environments.

The CFS VG-GEWGE provide the normative framework that guides JP RWEE's gender-transformative approach. As a concrete operational model for implementing the guidelines' recommendations, JP RWEE demonstrates how global policy commitments translate into measurable change for rural women.

The FAO programme on promoting the dissemination and uptake of the CFS VG-GEWGE aims to demonstrate how the guidelines can be used by stakeholders at all levels to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in food and nutrition interventions.

The two initiatives aim to maximize the impact of the CFS VG-GEWGE in countries that adopt and implement its recommendations.

For instance, in the United Republic of Tanzania, Zanzibar, the FAO programme on the dissemination of the CFS VG-GEWGE is raising awareness of this policy instrument among key national stakeholders. It will also build knowledge and capacities through a blended learning programme, produce evidence by conducting a gender assessment of sectoral policies and foster policy dialogue, in close coordination with government counterparts.

The FAO programme will strengthen rural communities' understanding of gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment, in line with the guidelines' key messages, by implementing a social and behavioural change campaign using local radios and Amplio Talking Books and leveraging existing approaches and community groups supported by the JP RWEE.

“ In Tanzania, both mainland and Zanzibar, the VG-GEWGE offer a strategic policy anchor for both the government as well as the JP RWEE to align the national and local intervention with the global commitments. It helps inform designs of inclusive knowledge products, trainings, as well as advocacy. It advocates for gender transformative approaches to culture as well as rural development.

Mondy Muhando, Director of the Blue Economy Development and Coordination Department, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zanzibar

CFS53 Side Event: From Policy to Action: Investing in Women for a Just Agrifood Systems Transformation, November 2025.

¹ World Bank Group, 2023. Gendered Impacts of Climate Change.

<https://wrd.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/WB-gendered-impacts-climate-change.pdf>

² FAO. 2023. The status of women in agrifood systems. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc5343en>

Supporting the rollout of the VG-GEWGE through JP RWEE

The CFS VG-GEWGE provide a roadmap to boost gender equality in the context of food security and nutrition, and initiatives like the JP RWEE contribute to turning these commitments into real, measurable change.

In line with the CFS VG-GEWGE recommendations, JP RWEE implements the following activities across its focus areas:*



Women's and girls' food security and nutrition:

JP RWEE provides training on nutrition, sustainable consumption and innovative technologies for food processing and storage. Women who attended the training have achieved an average of 82% increase in production and 9% increase in nutritious crop output by mid-2025.



Leadership and participation:

JP RWEE strengthens women's collective action and participation in cooperatives and community institutions. Across the countries where the JP RWEE is being implemented, 77% of producer organizations are led by rural women, and women's leadership in community decision-making bodies has increased by 25%.



Economic and social empowerment:

JP RWEE increases women's access to entrepreneurship opportunities and access to markets through value chain development, training and financial inclusion. Over USD 3.6 million were generated in sales, and USD 1.9 million mobilized through savings and loan schemes, and 4 600 rural women gained access to gender-responsive financial services.



Access to and control over resources:

JP RWEE works closely with local governments to secure land rights for rural women. In 2024, 267 Certificates of Customary Rights of Occupancy (CCROs) were formalized in Mwang'ana village in the United Republic of Tanzania. The programme also provides awareness-raising sessions for rural women on land and legal rights. Nearly 50% more participants now demonstrate improved understanding of their rights and relevant policy mechanisms.



Education and capacity building:

The programme provides Information and Communication Technology (ICT) training to promote digital financial inclusion and financial literacy training that enhances rural women's economic opportunities and skills.



Social protection and assistance:

JP RWEE helps ensure equal access to adequate social protection by promoting decent work and access to social protection for women. Within the programme, 4 600 rural women have gained access to gender-responsive financial services such as savings and credit.



Recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work:

JP RWEE works with governments to recognize, make visible and value women's unpaid work. In March 2024, the government of the United Republic of Tanzania launched its National Clean Cooking Strategy, aiming for 80% of the population to adopt clean cooking solutions by 2034. This strategy directly contributes to reducing women's unpaid care work, enhancing their economic productivity, and advancing gender equality. JP RWEE contributed to efforts to mainstream clean cooking into development plans at the local level.



Eliminating violence and discrimination:

A gender-transformative lens is applied across programme interventions to tackle the root causes of gender inequalities and bring about gender transformative change. Community dialogue and male engagement to tackle gender discriminatory social norms and attitudes as well as gender-transformative approaches have reached nearly 20 000 participants.



Gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment across food security and nutrition in conflicts, humanitarian crises and emergencies:

The programme applies social, economic, environmental and climate resilience lenses across interventions to reduce vulnerabilities and enhance rural women's resilience and ability to mitigate and adapt to shocks and stresses to their livelihood systems.

* All data presented in this section are as of mid 2025.



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<https://jprwee.org/>



<https://www.fao.org/voluntary-guidelines-gender-equality/>

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