



## Statement for the International Day of Rural Women from the Associated Country Women of the World 15 October 2024

ACWW joins the global community today, 15th October 2024, in marking the International Day of Rural Women. This year's theme is "Rural women sustaining nature for our collective future: building climate resilience, conserving biodiversity, and caring for land towards gender equality and empowerment of women and girls."

Since its foundation, ACWW has prioritised access to shared knowledge and training for rural women. We recognise and celebrate the crucial role that they play in achieving food security and a sustainable future for their families and communities.

Empowering women can lead to better food choices and health outcomes for families and their immediate communities. Advances in agricultural technology, such as agroecological farming methods and sustainable pest management can enhance food production. Providing women with access to education and training in basic agricultural sciences can improve productivity which can lead to improved income and wellbeing. By leveraging rural women's access to knowledge and innovative trends in agriculture and sustainable food systems that promote food security we can benefit future generations.

Women are often the first adopters of and promote agroecological practices that enhance biodiversity, improve soil health, and reduce reliance on chemical inputs; and across the world women-led initiatives focusing on sustainable farming practices contribute to resilient food systems that can withstand the impacts of climate change. Including rural women in policy discussions related to agriculture and food security ensures diverse perspectives when solutions are considered.

ACWW recently participated in the Central Asian Forum for Women, Science and Innovation for Food Security and Sustainable Future hosted by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Participants focused on strengthening food security, enhancing agricultural productivity, and preserving biodiversity - all of which require the active participation of women. The region's shared water resources and environmental challenges underscore the need for regional cooperation and the integration of gender-sensitive strategies in agricultural policies.

However, as in all parts of the world, rural women have less access to the benefits that science and innovative technologies can offer, compared to people residing in urban areas. This further contributes to the limited economic opportunities, with rural women having lower access to decent jobs and decent income. In the context of climate change resilience, access to resources – including decision-making and economic opportunities such as decent work – becomes even more critical for rural women.

ACWW invests in rural women as critical agents of change in the fight to end poverty and reach food security for all, and thus for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Harnessing rural women's potential is key to creating resilient and sustainable food systems that foster innovation and support the development of agricultural communities. This ensures a healthier future for both people and planet.

Recognising and honouring the International Day of Rural Women, ACWW continues to inform, inspire and empower. We seek to strengthen networking and collaboration among rural women and other stakeholders, and as rural women in action, amplify the voices of those most at risk of being left behind.

Magdie de Kock  
ACWW World President