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Strategy

Women's contributions to agriculture should be identified and recognized as a prerequisite to successful rural development and the achievement of basic development goals, such as food security, reduction of rural poverty, a rate of population growth compatible with natural and institutional resources, and adequate nutrition. The sensitization of policy makers and planners to this issue is a vital part of the strategy. Increasing women's access to inputs, services and land will then be seen as a logical step in attaining effective as well as equitable development.

Modern technology, including irrigation, should be made available to women. They should also have access to land, credit, marketing, transportation and storage facilities. Targets should be set for increasing extension contacts with rural women and for the recruitment and training of women as well as men extension workers. Technical co-operation and training will be organized on these subjects. Specifically, efforts will be made to train planners, including women, in programme and project design, the development of appraisal techniques, and monitoring to ensure that projects are examined in terms of both their impact on women and the contribution that women can make. Training and advisory services in management, credit, marketing and the development of co-operatives will also be emphasized.

Improved technologies that can be used by women for irrigation and land reclamation, improved seeds, food processing, storage and labour-saving equipment will be identified, tested and disseminated when proved effective. Improved methods of disseminating technology will be developed and tested. The special relevance for women of each technology will be assessed, taking account of user needs and the acceptability of the technology to users.

Concerning food production and processing, the strategy will consist of collecting information on experience, promoting tested and proved technologies and making them available at the national level through training and technical co-operation. Low-cost technologies and techniques that promise a relatively high return to labour will be identified and disseminated through existing institutions or through institutions and mechanisms created for this purpose.

Studies will be made of the causes of food crises, such as famine and drought, and their impact on women. Studies will be made comparing the impact of food crises on men and women to gain a better understanding of the impact on women as primary food producers and to determine needs for information and research to improve the response to food emergencies.

Efforts will be made to ensure that existing services are delivered efficiently, and the adequacy of available services in meeting existing needs will be assessed.

The organizations primarily responsible for implementing this subprogramme are FAO, IFAD, UNIFEM, WFP, the United Nations (ECA, UNEP) and the World Bank.