

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

### MEDIA ADVISORY

# COMMEMORATION OF INTERNATIONAL DAY OF RURAL WOMEN (IDRW) 2024

**Theme: Empowering Women Living in Rural Areas through Education and Access to Technology: Bridging the Gap for Inclusive and Sustainable Agri-Food Systems in Africa**

### INVITATION TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEDIA

**What:** Commemoration of International Day of Rural Women (IDRW) 2024

**When:** Tuesday, 15 October 2024

**Where:** African Union Headquarters, Nelson Mandela Conference Centre, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**Virtually via Zoom:**

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJErdeutrziEtK5K9vks6lWaik42oflZsaj>

**Who:**

- Ministers in charge of Agriculture Rural Development, Water and Environment from Africa Union Member States
- H.E Ambassador Josefa Sacko, Commissioner for Agriculture Rural Development Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE)
- Rural Women and Women Organisations
- Regional Economic Communities (RECs),
- Partners (Institutions/Organisations/Donors)
- Private sector representative and CSOs/NSAs representative
- Parliamentarian representative
- Farmer organizations and Youth representative

**Organizers:** The event is organized by the African Union Commission and partners

**Media opportunities:**

Dignitaries will deliver statements on the issues on the significant contributions of women living in rural areas in achieving continental development goals.

**Context:**

The International Day of Rural Women, established by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 62/136 of 18 December 2007, is observed on 15 October every year. The day recognizes “the critical role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women, in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security, and eradicating rural poverty.” The role of women in national development cannot be overemphasized. Women are

involved in production activities, and they are also homemakers. Much of the labor contribution of women remains invisible and unpaid for. Over the years, the workloads of women have become increasingly heavier due to the feminization of African agriculture from the out-migration of men from rural areas. As economic units, about 62% of women in Africa are involved in agriculture and allied occupations and around 40% of the total food production labour are supplied by women.

The positive impact of women's income on the wellbeing of household members has been widely documented in Africa. Women make significant contributions to agricultural food systems transformation in Africa; they are involved in farming, food processing and preparation, marketing, land, and natural resource management, and building climate resilience. However, less than 15% of women are agricultural landowners and they have limited access to training, productivity enhancing inputs such as quality seeds/stocks, agrochemicals and irrigation facilities and markets to mention a few. The implication of this is that productivity is lower in women owned farms and the continent is deprived of the associated economic and welfare benefits.

The Africa Union Agenda 2063 - the Africa we want, recognizes the significant contributions of women living in rural areas in achieving continental development goals. It acknowledges the need to tap this huge pool of economic producers to beneficiate the continent by emphasizing women empowerment as not just the right thing to do but as the critical ingredient in the fight against extreme poverty, illiteracy, hunger, and malnutrition. In the light of this, the African Union's Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (DARBE) commemorates yearly the international day of rural women.

The theme of this year's event is "Empowering Women Living in Rural Areas through Education and Access to Technology: Bridging the Gap for Inclusive and Sustainable Agri-Food Systems in Africa". The theme is aligned with the African Union's 2024 theme which is 'Educate an African fit for the 21st Century: Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa'. The event will showcase best practices in celebration of the transformative power of how education and access to technology can empower and reposition women living in rural areas to achieve inclusive and sustainable food systems. The event which will be preceded by the validation of the baseline study report on women in agriculture on 14th October and the IDRW celebration that will be held on 15th October 2024.

### **The Objectives:**

The event's overall objective is to showcase and celebrate best practices empowerment interventions promoting the development of inclusive and sustainable Agri-food systems in Africa. The specific objectives of the event are to:

- Showcase educational empowerment interventions that have resulted in inclusive and sustainable Agri-food systems transformation by women living in rural areas;
- Showcase best practices on how access to technology, market linkages and productive resources have resulted to food systems transformation in Africa;
- Create awareness, galvanize interest and mobilize political will on challenges and developmental activities of women living in rural areas in Africa;

- Advocate for policies and institutional strengthening that facilitate inclusion and empowerment of women living in rural areas, through education and capacity-building programs, in food systems transformation; and,
- Encourage partnership building among different stakeholders to strengthen and reposition women living in rural areas to productively contribute to sustainable food systems transformation.

**For further information, please contact:**

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