

## **Multi-Stakeholder Forum in preparation for CSW62**

25 January 2018

10 AM – 1PM and 3 - 6 PM

Conference Room 1, UNHQ, New York

### **Opening remarks for Ms. Lakshmi Puri, ASG and Deputy Executive Director, UN Women**

Distinguished Chair of CSW62,

Distinguished Permanent Representatives, Deputy Permanent Representatives, delegates, friends from civil society and the UN system,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the CSW 62 Multi-Stakeholder Forum!

UN Women is once again offering this platform to help delegates and other stakeholders to start focusing on one of the most critical and exciting intergovernmental events on the UN Calendar – the Commission on the Status of Women.

UN Women has convened such Multi-Stakeholder Forums at UN Headquarters in New York since 2013, in an effort to foster dialogue, build alliances and galvanize partnerships for action in support of gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the realization of their human rights. It complements the several regional events that UN Women is convening.

This Forum, 6 weeks prior to the session, provides once again an opportunity to zero in on some of the key areas and issues that should be considered by the Commission in the context of its priority theme, and ways and means to address them. We look for approaches and strategies that have brought results and we hope to identify areas that require enhanced commitments. Today's discussion should help in creating a conducive environment for a results-oriented and impactful CSW62.

Much is at stake. The CSW 62 priority theme on “Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls” will help Governments and all other stakeholders to shine a light on those women and girls who, on every gender and development indicator for which data are available, lag furthest behind. Rural women and girls are disproportionately affected by poverty and unequal access to land and natural resources, infrastructure and services, and decent work and social protection. The disproportionate effects of environmental and climate change on them are also clear.

Many issues need to be tackled simultaneously to ensure that rural women and girls can realize their human rights and are not left behind. These include the right to land and tenure security; the right to food and nutrition of adequate quality and quantity; the right to live a life free of all forms of violence, discrimination, and harmful practices; the right to the highest attainable standard of health, inclusive of sexual and reproductive health and rights; and the right to quality, affordable, and accessible education throughout the life cycle.

We need to support the livelihoods, well-being and resilience of rural women and girls, eliminate discriminatory laws, gender stereotypes and social norms that are barriers as rural women and girls seek to claim opportunities for change. We need to ensure that rural women and girls can exercise voice, leadership and participation. And we need significant investment in rural women and girls so that they can claim their rights and their rightful role as agents and drivers of sustainable development, peace and security, and enjoyment of human rights.

We are very pleased and grateful that so many friends of gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls have offered to contribute to today's event. Your insights and contributions will help put everyone on the right path for a smooth session with agreement on concrete, practical and action-oriented steps to be taken by Member States and other stakeholders for rural women and girls. We look to your guidance and leadership, so that the discussions today, and at CSW62, can have the true impact we all aspire to: real, positive change in the lives of rural women and girls.

We have retained four topics for your reflections. Each topic will be introduced by a panel of leaders and activists on gender equality from Permanent Missions, civil society, and the UN system. Their interventions will be followed by comments from the floor, time permitting.

This morning, we will consider rural women's land rights and tenure security together with food security and nutrition. And we will focus on quality education and access to information and communications technologies (ICT).

In the afternoon, we will look at health including sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as infrastructure, water and sanitation. And we will discuss ending violence and harmful practices against rural women and girls.

I thank all those who will moderate or speak as panelists, and who will comment from the floor. At the end of the day, we look for your strong sense of commitment to the issue, and to the success of CSW62.

I thank you.