

***Information of Slovenia on implementation of UN General Assembly resolution
"Improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural areas" (A/RES/72/148)***

Slovenia attaches great importance to gender equality both in national policies as well as in its foreign policy and international development cooperation.

In October 2015 the government has adopted its second national programme for equality between women and men by 2020 that enlists main priorities of action to achieve gender equality in Slovenia. Main priorities are economic independence and work-life balance, elimination of gender stereotypes, social inclusion, decision-making, health of women and men, prevention of violence against women and gender equality in foreign policy and international cooperation. Rural women participate in its implementation as beneficiaries of relevant programmes and projects as well as promoters of gender equality.

In Slovenia, rural women and women farmers account for a big part of the labour force in the rural area and they play important role in all aspects of rural life. They are important as food producers and important pillar of social environment in rural areas. They are also important contributors in transferring traditional knowledge and sustainable (farming) practices to children and youth. They also take up majority of care responsibilities.

Women, living in rural areas in Slovenia, have equal access to social and health care services as well as to education.

Support for rural women is one of the priorities of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food (MAFF). The MAFF implements numerous activities and measures for a better inclusion of rural women and women farmers in the decision-making processes on the future of agriculture and rural development in Slovenia. Women are already well included in those processes. Rural women are represented in the MAFF's consultative multi-stakeholder body - Agriculture and Rural Development Council as well as in MAFF's monitoring body for Rural Development Programme 2014–2020 (RDP).

On 7 March 2019 a Council for Rural Women has been established as a consultative body of the minister of agriculture, forestry and food. Its main focus is monitoring the status of rural women and giving proposals for improvement of their status. The Council will also have a consultative role in decision-making and adoption of national rural development strategies, it will contribute to awareness raising and strengthening intergenerational cooperation of rural women.

Several measures of RDP contribute to empowerment of rural women in Slovenia. They include:

- Support for diversification of farming activities: support is granted to projects of cooperation between farms and legal entities that are part of test activities performed in education, health care, social protection and protection of persons with disabilities. Purpose of these test activities is consideration of the possibility of development of subsidiary on-farm activities in these fields. Subsidiary on-farm activities are an important source of income for rural women.
- Business start-up aid for young farmers: the measure also targets young women farmers. Through this measure the MAFF is aiming to promote and support women in their decision to live in rural areas.
- Support for local development in the frame of the LEADER initiative: the initiative can be used to support women through the development of community-led local action groups in the frame of the thematic area of action "greater inclusion of the young, women and other vulnerable groups"

For achieving de facto gender equality in Slovenian rural areas MAFF cooperates closely with the Association of Rural Women of Slovenia. This is an umbrella organization with more than 80 local organizations. The Association main aims are: to preserve the traditional knowledge and customs of rural areas; to connect, organize and empower rural women; to improve the status of women in the countryside; to promote human rights of women and prevent violence against women.

Slovenia implements development cooperation to foster a more balanced and fair global development and bears its share of responsibility in efforts to eradicate poverty and inequality and to achieve sustainable development. The Slovenian development cooperation system is focused on two **cross-cutting issues**: environmental protection and gender equality. Contributions to their implementation are at the core and must be taken into account in all Slovenian development cooperation activities. Below is an information on current development projects, financed by Slovenia, that contribute to improving situation of rural women in developing countries.

MORE EFFICIENT RESOURCE USE TO ENSURE SUSTAINABLE SURVIVAL IN THE DISTRICT OF KARONGI, RWANDA

The project will focus on access to, and the protection and efficient use of, natural resources in western Rwanda, where unsustainable use threatens the survival of the poorest section of the population. Survival in Rwanda, the most densely populated African countries, relies mostly on agriculture. However, there is a lack of arable land, and the quality of the soil is deteriorating, partly due to excessive deforestation, erosion and drought. The project's goal is to improve access to natural resources and their efficient use, thereby increasing the possibilities of survival and improving the quality of life of the poorest sections of the western Rwandan population. Within the project, 600 most vulnerable households in the Mutuntu and Gashari Sectors, District of Karongi, will start using more efficient and environment-friendly energy sources for various purposes. Solar light systems will be installed and new stoves built, which will considerably reduce the consumption of firewood for cooking, thus ensuring a healthier environment. By building terraces and planting trees, arable land will be better protected from erosion. The training provided within the project will also improve agricultural practices, which will sustainably contribute to higher yields. With the knowledge and skills acquired during the training sessions, women and girls will be able to carry out environment-friendly activities that will provide them income.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN RURAL SOUTH-EASTERN SERBIA

Unemployment rate in Serbia is at 17.7%. Women from rural areas account for more than a half of the unemployed. The project activities will open possibilities for generating income and providing jobs for 240 unemployed women from rural areas in the municipalities of Aleksinac, Ražanj, Boljevac and Knjaževac. Education on their rights, practical professional training, obtaining funds for launching a family business (in tourism, processing of produce, etc.), competitions for women for micro-financing of 40 most innovative ideas for small family businesses, study visits and exchanges will contribute to the greater economic independence of women, a better standard of living and a more equal position in society.

IMPROVED SECURITY OF FOOD AND DRINKING WATER SUPPLY AMONG REFUGEE AND LOCAL POPULATIONS IN UGANDA DESPITE HUMANITARIAN CRISES

The project, which is carried out from February 2017 to October 2019, aims at increasing resilience to crises and improving the food security and access to drinking water supply for a minimum of 400 persons in Ndejje, near the Ugandan capital Kampala. It will enhance the resilience of Ndejje's refugee and local population, predominantly women, who suffer from chronic deprivation of basic dietary needs caused by longer drought periods. Various project activities will allow them to grow local vegetables, breed chicken and have access to drinking

water; awareness will also be raised about their dietary needs and about how to prevent climate change etc.

STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN ALBANIA TO PROVIDE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The unequal distribution of economic power, followed by poor inclusion of women in the labour market and high pay gap, low participation of women in the decision-making processes and violence against women continue to be present in Albania despite the progress made in the recent years. Some groups of women are particularly vulnerable, including those living in rural parts of the country such as the Municipality of Pukë. The project focuses on contributing to gender equality in the distribution of powers in Albania. The aim is to strengthen the economic independence of women in Pukë. In the Municipality of Pukë, unemployed women in a rural area will become self-sufficient by engaging in goat breeding. They will be provided with appropriate working conditions and training on breeding, product processing and marketing.

EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF VULNERABLE GROUPS OF WOMEN IN RWANDA

The project targets the underprivileged status of women in Rwandan society, further aggravated by their low educational level (28% of women have incomplete basic education), economic dependency (50% of women are engaged in informal forms of work and are not paid in money), lack of skills that enable basic income, etc. All this contributes to the poverty of entire families, children leaving school early and the continued exploitation of women. This problem is particularly pressing among poor women in rural and urban settings, including the local areas targeted by the project.

The goal of the project, involving over 800 women and girls, is to promote the literacy and economic independence of the most vulnerable groups of women and girls in the suburbs and on the outskirts of Kigali, and to reduce differences between men and women. Teaching women to read and write and training them to become seamstresses and hairdressers will improve their employment opportunities and economic position, which might enable them to break the vicious circle of poverty. Furthermore, the project helps reduce gender inequality and discrimination against women and girls.