

Women's Leadership Day and Farmer's Forum

Farmer and Nature Net (FNN) is one of the members of Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA) was invited to join in the **Women 's Leadership Day**, and **Farmers' Forum** in Rome, Italy, from February 11-20, 2010, which supported by International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Total of participants is around 70 people from around the globe.

All participants, each session, were divided into thematic groups by continent such as Asian, South Africa, and Central Africa etc. to share about the issues confronted by women farmers in agriculture and to find out special programs, concrete activities and recommendations.



Second from the left, Ms. Kong Sokchhoin, FNN project coordinator, represents FNN Cambodia at the 3rd Farmer's Forum, February 15– 16, 2010, in Rome, Italy.

As results, the concrete recommendations were included (1) women need special programs to support young farmers, which mainly focus on young women, to encourage women to involve with men' activities (men have to support the women); and (2) need technical trainings on advocacy and agro-business in order to empower women and to additionally generate incomes. With regard to this matter, we firstly need the women economic empowerment and other activities should be followed for next step. The results of the Women's Leadership Day were also included into the synthesis of deliberation of the Third Meeting of the Farmers' Forum.

The third Farmers' Forum of IFAD organized with participants from 5 continents, which supported by IFAD. The process of the forum is quite similar to the Women's Leadership Day, eight Asian countries participated: Cambodia, Philippines, Indonesia, India, Nepal, Srilanka, Maldives and South Korea.

Purpose of the Farmers' Forum is to engage a dialogue with participants and formulate recommendations on how to help Farmer Organizations (FOs) to provide better services to their members, particularly with regard to a question on how to adapt support to FOs' development, taking into account the diversify of FOs and their various levels of maturity, how to reach the right balance between internal and external services, and how to attain sustainability in serving delivery while strengthening the accountability of FOs to their members.

Finally, the Farmers' Forum issued a statement to seek for IFAD support and ongoing that mainly focuses on:

- Direct support to Farmers' Organizations through funding for capacity building program via regional networks and federations for the sake of economies of scales and efficiencies;
- Open space for women farmers leaders to participate in the country and global policy processes and also in IFAC country strategy consultation;
- invest more grant resources in increasing capacity of farmers' organizations to address gender issues and empower women, strengthen women's leadership-where possible channeling fund directly to women's structure within organization
- Invest in young farmers, designate within IFAD a focal point for youth, mainstream youth in all IFAD policies and programs and with a gender balance, and hold a global workshop on youth involvement in Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development during this year (UN Year of Youth), etc.
- IFAD should focus on indigenous people as well.

In that special occasion, Ms. Kong Sokchhoin, also join the discussion with Ms. Jeannette Gurung, director of WOCAN and other Asian ladies to discuss about preparing proposal to support and strengthening capacity of rural women in term of economic empower and policy advocacy with refer to result of Women's Leadership's Day. I hope that it will be a good opportunity to link rural women network of FNN to WOCAN (Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management).

Women Leaders Raised their Voices at the Global Farmers' Forum



More than 70 world farmers' leaders, representing millions of small households and rural farmers from all over the world, were actively participating in the Global Farmers' Forum on February 15-16, 2010, in Rome, Italy. The Forum was granted a great honor of opening speech by Mr. Kanayo Nwanze, IFAD President. Then, women leaders from Asia, which represented by the Asia Farmer Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA), La Via Campesina (LVC) and other farmers' organizations, were parts of the historical forum.

The women leaders included Ms. Kong Sokchhoin (FNN, Cambodia), Ms. Flora Caya (PAKISAMA, Philippines), India Smitha (SEWA, India), Ms. Amalia Pulungan (API, Indonesia), Ms. Esther Penunia (AFA), Ms. Marlene Ramirez (AsiaDHRRA), and others. Together with other women leaders from all over the world, they raised the issues and concerns of small scale farmers both men and women. Critical problems have been challenging women/children included sex abuse, sex exploitation, children and women trafficking, discrimination against women, domestic violence, child mortality, death of mother when delivering a baby, migration of young women workers, and marginalization of women in the society and so on.

Hence, in order to promote balance gender and especially to promote the women's dignity in the society, women should be provided equal opportunity to participate in economic and socio-political processes. Women leadership must be encouraged and strengthened by all social actors in order to create a harmonious society for men and women to live together. Nevertheless, active participation of the women themselves is absolutely significant to promote the balance gender.

The third global meeting of the Farmers' Forum was held in conjunction with the thirty-third session of IFAD's Governing Council. Following a recommendation of the Forum in 2008, a special effort has been made by participating farmers' organizations to increase women's presence and voice in the event. A preparatory meeting was held on 13 February to reflect on how to promote women's leadership in farmers' organizations. The commitment to have at least 30 per cent of women farm leaders participating in the Forum has been achieved (Source: IFAD website).