

**REPORT OF WOMEN MAJOR GROUP  
SIDE EVENT AT THE AFRICAN RIM**

***WOMEN MAJOR GROUP STRATEGY  
LEADING UP TO THE PROCESS OF CSD 16  
22 October 2007, from 13:00h to 15:00h,  
Held in Addis Ababa, UN Conference Center***

The Side Event was organised during the Fifth Meeting of the Africa Committee on Sustainable Development (ACSD-5)/Regional Implementation Meeting (RIM) for CSD-16 in Addis Ababa, 22-25 October 2007. The theme of the meeting, organized by the UN Economic Commission for Africa, was- ‘Transforming African Agriculture and Rural Economy for Sustainable Development’.

The organisers include the three organising partners of the Women Major Group of CSD-16 & 17, Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN), African Women Leaders in Agriculture and the Environment (AWLAE), and the GRATIS Foundation (Ghana).

The organising partners would like to acknowledge the support received from Heifer International and from the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development Secretariat (CSD) for the organisation of the event, participation of Women Major Group organisers and participants to the Africa RIM.

The organisers would also like to acknowledge the support received from Mr. Ousmane Laye of the Food Security and Sustainable Development Division (FSSD) of the UNECA for facilitating the participation of the Women Major Group to the processes of the Africa RIM.

Special thanks to Mr. Ali Mohamed, the Chair of the Africa RIM, who exemplified his support to the major groups all throughout the Africa RIM and particularly during this Women Major Group Side Event . This gave a high profile to women’s concerns both during the Drafting Committee and Plenary sessions.

**Summary**

The Side Event received impressive remarks from the participants, coming not only from Women and NGO Major Groups, but also from the RIM Chair himself, representatives of governments and UN ECA staff. All of them stayed throughout the whole two-hour lunch break event.<sup>i</sup>

The Side Event broke new ground in the history of the Africa RIM, being the first request received by the UNECA from a major group- led to organise a Side Event.<sup>ii</sup> Unlike other events organised by other UN agencies, such as UNEP and UN Habitat which served full sit-down luncheon event, this two-hour long facilitated event engaged participants to learn from each other and contribute to the goals of the Women Major Group processes leading to CSD. As expressed by the Chair himself, “*We also learned a lot from your event and I want to thank you for inviting me...*”

The participants valued the biggest challenge of the CSD process that needs a truly participatory and consultative process at the national level starting from all major groups that have a stake on the inter-related and cross-cutting thematic clusters of the CSD-16 on agriculture, rural development, land,

drought, desertification and Africa. Such consultation processes at the national level, being promoted by the Women Major Group, is a pre-condition that should feed-into CSD-16.

By the end of the event, the participants agreed on the common and coordinated strategy for the Women Major Group, as well as key and emerging issues, cases and messages, that should be highlighted in the discussions and processes leading to CSD-16. One such process is the preparation for the Women Major Group Discussion Paper which is due on 30<sup>th</sup> November.

While all these activities and contributions require resources and commitment from those who wish to engage in the lead up to CSD, perhaps the real barometer to sustain a productive and innovative outcome from the RIM should start with the way partners engage with each other as exemplified during the Africa RIM. Certainly, the Chair set a good precedent to open this first day Side Event of the Women Major Group (which has been a good start.)

It was unfortunate that while the intention of the event was also to have a coordinated strategy with other major groups, such as Indigenous Peoples, Youth, Scientific Community,....., there were no other organising partners present, at the Event which may have been due to lack or delay of funding to bring their representatives. It is noteworthy to mention that some women managed to organize despite last minute arrangements and funding support. They arrived in Addis in time even with very limited pocket money and without visa!

### **The Proceedings of the Side Event**

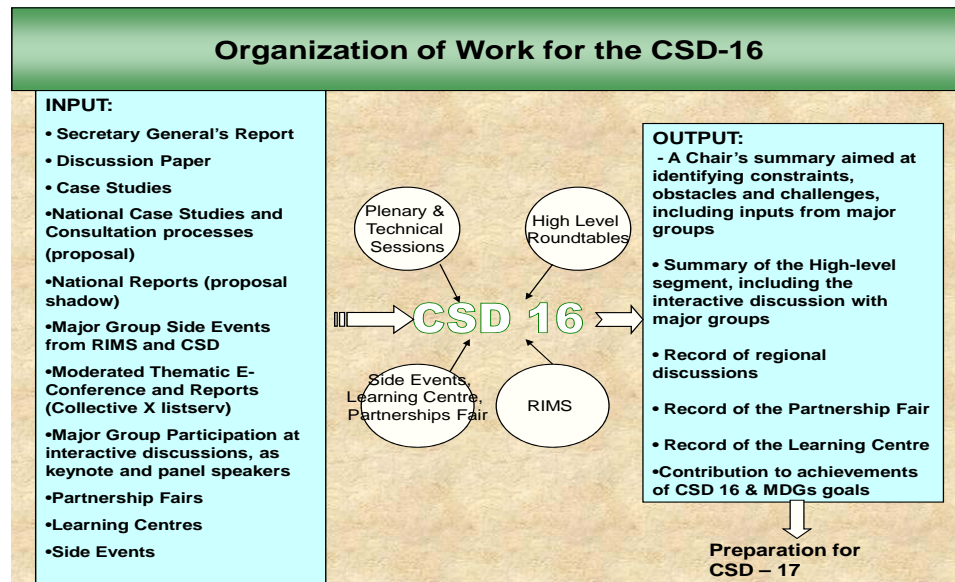
The Chair officially opened the Side Event and welcomed the participants.

Ms. Constance Neely, facilitator of the event, welcomed the participants and the three organising partners introduced their organisations. (See Annex 1 – Background of Organising Partners.)

### **The Organisation of Work of CSD**

The main topic of the event was the Roadmap to CSD 16. The first presenter, Ms. Jing de la Rosa, representative from WOCAN, provided the background of the responsibilities of organising partners and highlighted that it was a mandate received in late September 2007 from the Chair of the CSD through the CSD Secretariat in New York. (See Annex 1 - The major groups organizing partners' responsibilities.)

She also presented the Organisation of Work of CSD (below) highlighting where major groups can find entry points for participation and inputs all throughout the processes leading to CSD 16 & 17.



### Women Major Group Discussion Paper (Assessing JPOI)

The second presenter, Ms. Charity Kabutha, representing AWLAE-Net, described the Major Group Discussion Paper that requires urgent inputs based on the assessment of the Johannesburg Programme of Implementation (JPOI) of the thematic areas, identifying obstacles and constraints to implementation and new challenges faced by major groups. Given the tight deadline of 30 November 2007, she highlighted the need for information that are well articulated from different sources that will ensure women major groups issues are taken on board, and at the same time the essence of speed for integrating all inputs. (See Annex 3 – Presentation of the Outline of Discussion Paper.)

### Identification of emerging messages by themes

At this point inputs were requested from the participants regarding their views on what should be the key messages related to women in the context of CSD themes on agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa, and cross-cutting themes, that should be highlighted at the CSD and for the Discussion Paper. She also encouraged participants to suggest case studies that works that should also be highlighted in the Discussion Paper. Participants were asked to discuss with the next person beside them for five minutes and to write their inputs on the paper provided and to post them on wall under the themes of CSD.

The facilitator recapped the inputs followed by clustering of inputs in common themes. The issues generated would be reflected in the Discussion Paper for Women's Major Group for CSD – 16:

### Issues in Agriculture

- Ownership/access to land
- More access to state land
- Land ownership
- More food through land ownership
- Access to technology/capacity building
- Poor technology/access know-how
- Technical capacity building
- Inadequate access to appropriate technologies

- Markets and Infrastructure
- Poor markets
- Lack of skills – movement from subsistence to commercial
- Infrastructure
- Success practices
- Appropriate technology (Conservation agriculture is helping women and environment and productivity – there are several cases in 5 African Countries (reducing labour) – however need access to equipment)

#### **Issues under Land**

- Access/Ownership
- Inadequate access to major resources for sustainable development (e.g. land) and natural resources
- Inadequate access to land
- Access to land by women/ownership
- Access to capital land development by women
- Land rights for women
- Ownership and access to land – improve their livelihood/socio-economic status
- Access to land through facilitating and advocating for the review /reform of gender sensitive customary laws and practices
- Lack access to/or land ownership/tenure
- Inadequate ownership of land and natural resources
- Governance
- Skills for effective participation in governance

#### **Issues under Desertification**

- Land and Ecosystem Management
- Management of the ecosystem
- Access to water
- Flooding
- Reliance on natural resources as source of livelihoods and sustainability
- Awareness and involvement of women at all levels of NRM
- Participation in rehabilitation programmes and projects
- Migration
- Internal migration
- Conflict
- Conflict – resource use

#### **Issues under Drought**

- Vulnerability of women to drought
- Integrated management of natural resources
- Water and sanitation and resource management
- Unsustainable NRM impacts negatively on women- Energy, food, water

#### **Issues under Rural development**

- Capacity to demand livelihood improving assistance
- Access to amenities

- Economic empowerment (increased access to resources)
- Migration
- Un-employment
- Lack of energy
- Low resources allocation to rural development

#### **Issues under Africa**

- Peace and stability
- Women play a key role in food security in Africa

#### **Cross Cutting**

- Illiteracy
- Illiteracy among women affecting adoption rates
- Functional literacy centers for adults
- Decision Making and Policy
- Women as key stakeholders in SD
- Policy framework – customary law vs. general law
- Culture and leadership – traditional roles
- Women as effective leaders to participate in governance (skills, leadership, facilitation)
- Global Issues
- Women and climate change
- Women and globalization
- Urbanization – majority in slums (No social amenities)
- Knowledge Exchange
- Networking south-south, north-south among women professional leaders and farmers

#### **Preparation of national and regional positions**

The organisers requested the RIM Chair, Mr. Ali Mohammed, to provide the guiding framework for the ensuing processes post-RIM? particularly on the challenge of national and regional positions. The Chair provided his insights on broad-based and pro-active consultation process with civil society for policy issues from his own Ministry, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) of Kenya. He pointed that the Side Event must indeed be the space to open up, speak our minds and discuss the issues, unlike the plenary that is formal. For CSD, he sees the challenge of broad consultation process – how well is the representation among participants and how well are key issues of the agenda are being brought out and its implementation. He cited the passionate appeal of the African Union speaker to understand where did we go wrong on the implementation and that we have to be cognisant of the fact that Africa is at the centre stage. His quest is to find that out whether is it because we failed to consult or we need more involvement of civil society? What is it that we need to do in order to put forward the issues?

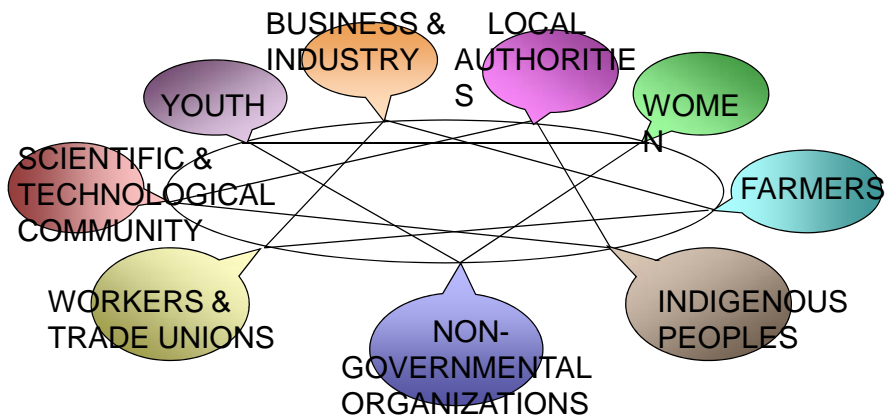
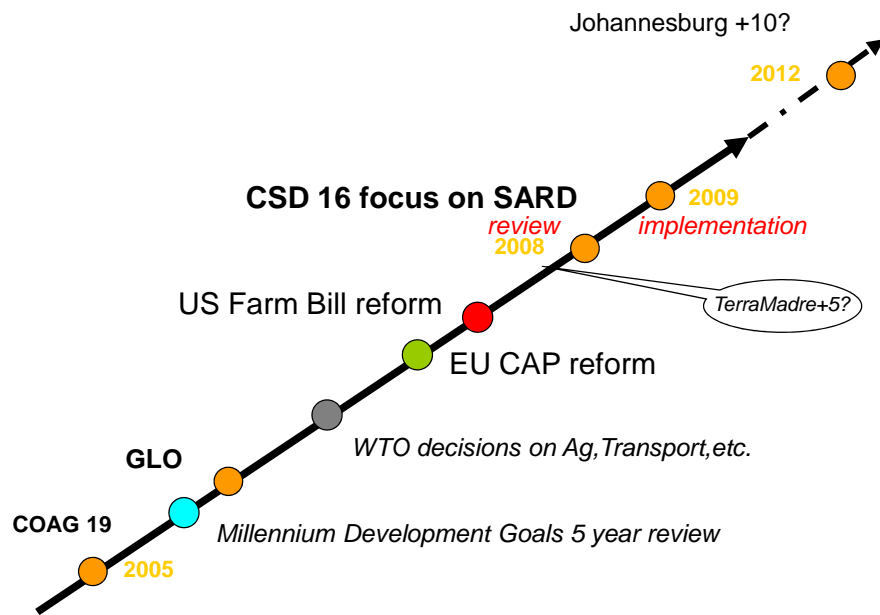
Ms. Joan Kagwanja, representative from FSSD of UNECA, pointed out the need for major groups to be organised to reach out, as already exemplified in the Side Event and in addition to ensure that interventions get to the floor through the delegates who will put the issues on the floor.

The representative from IUCN, who mentioned that although it was his first time in the CSD process, his extensive experience in other fora allowed him to propose that effective preparation is very important, particularly in Africa. Preparations at national and regional levels in terms of knowledge

sharing and information exchange on the discussion topics will be required. Irrespective of how we define as effective preparation, we can utilise whatever information and make everyone get involve in getting the knowledge and information on issues. However, effective preparation is not enough but has to be accompanied by actual participation, with effective contributions for whatever has been realized or learned during preparations will also be important. Therefore, groups like the organisers of the Side Event who come up with issues to be discussed shall meet the challenge on how these issues can be fairly represented in the debates and go to the agenda for discussion, and remain in the outcome report. He noted: *“We have to get ourselves organised in terms of issues presented at the CSD 16 and there are different entry points. Government delegations are important for entry points and make them understand the issues. Some of the delegates may not be well versed with the agenda and someone else maybe tasked to participate in CSD which can be a real challenge.”*

### **Timeline on Priority Activities**

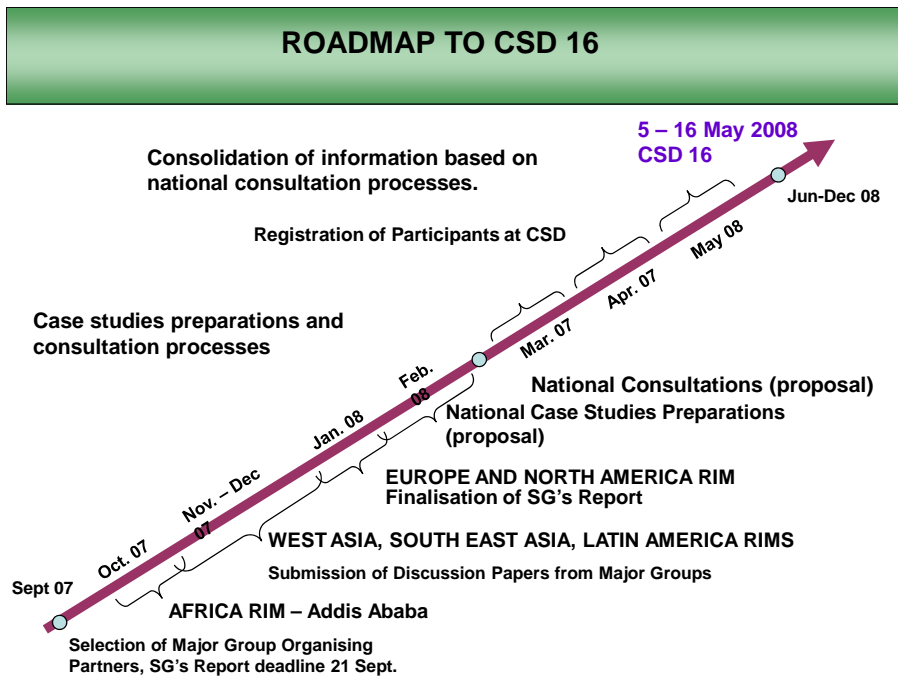
Arthur Escudero of Heifer International and International Partnerships for Sustainable Agriculture (IPSA) briefly highlighted the big picture of the IGO processes, including the relevance of the CSD regional processes to other processes relevant to agriculture in general. CSO engagements in different fora like at the FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG), the MDG fora, its links to the debate of the WSSD and Doha rounds – are all telling us that agriculture is now back in the international agenda. Recognizing that WTO negotiations is one fora where agriculture agenda has been hampered, there are fora like CSD 8 on SARD that is now being repeated in this CSD 16 where civil society and major groups can discuss with governments. The ongoing reform efforts in EU environment (ACP), the US Farm Bill, and throughout the second cycle of CSD 17 – will hopefully shape and open up the discussions in an integrated manner. We therefore now have an opportunity at this Africa RIM to set a high standard as well for other RIMS, and perhaps up to WSSD + 10. See illustration below from his powerpoint presentation.



### Participation at CSD 2008-2009

Sabina Mensah of the GRATIS Foundation provided the immediate timeline for CSD 16. She provided her reflection on the beginning of the processes leading to CSD 16 which was initiated going back to CSD-15. She indicated that the first inputs from the major groups for the Secretary General's Report, with a deadline of September 21, did not really allow for broad-based inputs. However, she emphasised that since Africa is a theme in itself we need to ensure inputs from Africa region for the thematic areas. She was proud to announce that women's voices have been heard in CSD processes,

particularly during the last cycle of CSD. And she also reminded everyone that inputs should not only be from women but also from men who support women's plight. She noted that the Discussion Paper should also highlight the need to link water with drought given the different episodes of flooding all over Africa recently. She sought support for the Women Major Group effective participation to the CSD that is still seeking funding in order to bring the voices of rural women. She encouraged those who can provide their suggestions to contact the three organising partners and also to be involved in the Collective X listserv. She presented the roadmap highlighting important dates to which we should pay attention. How participation is manifested is important for CSD.



### Tools and Skills Building Needs for Advocacy, Negotiation and Facilitation

Building from participant's comments, the facilitator encouraged everyone to write their needs and requirements for particular skills that will be helpful for them in terms of advocacy, negotiation and participation. The written inputs would allow the organisers to meet those demands/needs in the following morning training session and in the module development for CSD.

Charity Kabutha emphasized that women are not a homogenous group and discussions need to reflect this complexity and the interrelated themes. The needs of women, depending on category, are very specific which needs to be dealt with differently from a general discussion. Categories of women which should be met, for example in refugee settings. She encouraged participants to unpack the different needs of women so that the different strategies can be generated. In the case studies preparations, it would be good to have specific strategies and develop recommendations and that are not generic for women for all women.

A Kenyan government representative provided a very good contribution to let the group reflect that the themes of agriculture, land, rural development, desertification and drought are all important issues. He suggested for the group comes up with a matrix (visual) showing the links between the issues and also with MDG links to poverty alleviation. For example, we need to look at women in terms of



environment sustainability, women in terms of building partnerships with women's groups, etc. It is important to have a visual matrix to show the impact to women and to come up with short and long term intervention that can be reflected to CSD 16. Another participant highlighted the need to also capture the cross cutting issues of women and children. He agreed to work with Charity Kabutha upon their return to Kenya to produce this matrix.

### **Plans for the week**

The group plan for the week was announced, starting with the Skills Building session on Advocacy, Negotiation and Participation the following day and a one-hour Women Major Group Caucus every day. It was announced that Sabina Mensah would lead the working group in drafting the Discussion Paper. The paper will be posted on the listserv so that people can provide their inputs.

The group ended the meeting with a song led by Beatrice Diffang from Women on the Move for Equal Development (WOMED) – a common African Song called *Malaika* – women are the *malaika*....

### **Conclusion**

The Women Major Group representatives who attended the Africa RIM and the Side Event, though few in number, (about ten women), and also representatives from NGO Major Group and Business Industry Major Group, underlined a high level of commitment throughout the week through their well-articulated positions to bring up the issues during the drafting committee negotiations and plenary session.

Many of these women and groups may not have taken active part in such UN processes but have a major stake in the field of agriculture and rural development. They brought with them their grassroots and network's programme experiences. One interesting interjection made by Charity Kabutha of the AWLAE, was on the available statistics from the World Bank and African Development Bank, regarding economic gains and opportunity costs for not gender mainstreaming. The Women Major Group actively participated during the Drafting Committee of the Outcome Document of the Africa RIM. Many of us went home with a feeling of content especially after comparing the Draft Outcome document from the beginning of the negotiation to the adoption of the document.

*Contact for the Women Major Group organising partners are:*

*Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management(WOCAN)*

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*The African Women Leaders in Agriculture and the Environment (AWLAE), Charity Kabutha, [awlaenet@winrock.or.ke](mailto:awlaenet@winrock.or.ke), [c\\_kabutha@yahoo.com](mailto:c_kabutha@yahoo.com)*

*The GRATIS Foundation (Ghana), Sabina Anokaye Mensah, [sabinamensah@hotmail.com](mailto:sabinamensah@hotmail.com); website [www.gratisghana.com](http://www.gratisghana.com)*

## Annex 1

### BACKGROUND OF WOMEN MAJOR GROUP ORGANIZING PARTNERS

**WOCAN** is a membership network of more than 400 professional women and men from over 80 countries and 12 international organizations. WOCAN's vision in its role at CSD is to bring the voices of rural women in the discourse. Participation in global conferences has criticized by the lack of participation of rural women themselves or women who can truly bring the voices of rural women's needs and concerns. To begin with, the agriculture sector that is a very male-dominated sector have been lagging in women's participation in the policy and decision making processes at the global, regional and national levels. So far, the global policy making (intergovernmental) processes relevant to gender and rural women have been limited to women's reproductive health, rights and micro-finance. Economic empowerment has largely neglected rural women's access to agriculture and natural resources. Since its founding, WOCAN has been filling the void that had existed within the intergovernmental processes where spaces for rural women have been lacking. In particular, it has been instrumental in facilitating the participation of women foresters and agronomists from developing countries to speak to the UN conferences and to prepare annual discussion papers, panel discussions, and side events to bring awareness and the pressure to change on all UN member countries and the UN itself.

**AWLAE-Net** is a regional membership organization working with 10 member organizations in Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda and has a membership of about 2000 women scientists in representing different disciplines and competencies in the sectors of agriculture and environment. AWLAE-Net took over from the AWLAE program of Winrock International in March 2006, to continue with the ideology and strategies of a program launched in 1989/90 by Winrock International. AWLAE-Net brings on board a number of strengths, including its ability to advocate for gender equity and mainstreaming gender in institutions of agriculture and environment. The organization has also managed to build a critical mass of women with high academic credentials and leadership skills. In total, it has provided 570 under-graduate and graduate scholarship and supported about 50,000 girls to pursue both primary and secondary education. The AWLAE-Net organizations in different countries have reached over 100,000 women farmers with agriculture and environment technologies to improve their status and to improve livelihoods of their own families. AWLAE-Net is committed to making significant contribution to Africa's agriculture and environment agenda and is participating in consultations on the NEPAD/Africa Union Commission Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program.

**The GRATIS Foundation** promotes small-scale industrialisation at the grass roots level and is in direct contact women's groups both in Ghana and the West African subregion. GRATIS Foundation transfers appropriate technologies to small scale industries where women abound. It coordinates the activities and provides backstopping to its network of intermediate technology transfer units and its clients. The Gender and Development unit of the Foundation collaborates with the Gender and Energy Network of Ghana to ensure gender mainstreaming in institutions throughout the country and the subregion. The GRATIS Foundation develops, promotes and disseminates marketable technologies and skills with gender considerations for the growth of industry, particularly, micro, small and medium scale enterprises in Ghana and the West Africa Sub Region. Its vision is to become a reputable gender sensitive technology development and skills transfer organization in Africa. Improving access of women to the opportunities, services and resources at the GRATIS Foundation and beyond. 21,164 people including 8,011 women have received technical assistance and entrepreneurial training under the GRATIS extension programme. (This includes training in income generating activities such as food processing, beekeeping and textiles production). 1367 young men and women have been trained under the 3-year GRATIS Technical Apprentice Training Programme for employment since 1988. 2,126 people, (85% female) have been trained under the batik, tie and dye/screen printing training programme instituted in 1988.

Presented by R. Jing de la Rosa

**The major groups organizing partners' responsibilities**

- **Consulting with networks to prepare written inputs in the form of discussion papers addressing agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification, and Africa — including the cross-sectoral themes—that reflect their group's views on progress made, outline obstacles and constraints to implementation, and identify new challenges to be met by major groups to expedite implementation.**
- **Organizing, managing and disseminating data and information on Major Groups and the CSD-16.**
- **Consulting with networks to identify participants to serve on their sector's delegation.**
- **Coordinating and facilitating the participation of representatives of their respective sector throughout the CSD-16 session, working in collaboration with other major group sectors' representatives present at CSD-16 and in the RIMs.**

Presented by Charity Kabutha

**Discussion Papers**

**Overview**

- ❑ From each of the 9 major groups-Women, Youth, Farmers, NGOs, Business & Industry, Local Authorities, Indigenous Peoples, Agricultural Workers and Science and Technology
- ❑ **Purpose/Focus**
  - Summarize sector's progress in relation to the thematic areas (agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa) identifying obstacles and opportunities and strategies to address challenges

**STRUCTURE OF DISCUSSION PAPERS**

**A: Introduction**

1. Issues to be addressed:
  - What are the concerns? Summarize and link the concerns to key thematic groups-issues on land, rural development etc

**B: Review of Implementation**

1. **Analysis of progress or lack of it** in the implementation of given commitments, goals and targets in the thematic cluster issues
  - Trends observed-positive, negative, static
  - Reference to charts, tables, data and graphs-statistics
  - Brief reference to case studies (longer version can be annexed)-Case studies-successful and not so successful. Bring out factors of success and failure and lessons learned

**C: Identification of obstacles/constraints encountered in the course of implementation**

1. Categorize constraints to help develop appropriate strategies-policy, strategies, resources, capacity etc
2. Highlight factors responsible for generating constraints

**D: Lessons Learned & Opportunities to address challenges**

1. **Lessons Learned**
  - What worked and why did it work?
  - What did not work and why did it not work?
2. **Opportunities**

- ✳ What exists that you can take advantage of to address the challenges?
- ✳ Strategies and recommendations to address challenges and take advantage of opportunities

**SOME RULES ON PAPERS**

- ✳ Length-Final Paper-8000 words-approximately-Concise, comprehensive- 15 Days
- ✳ Submission Date: 30 November 2007-speed of essence

# **WOMEN MAJOR GROUP STRATEGY LEADING UP TO THE PROCESS OF CSD 16**

*A Side Event organized by the CSD Women Major Group Organising Partners*

*Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management(WOCAN),  
African Women Leaders in Agriculture and the Environment (AWLAE)  
The GRATIS Foundation (Ghana)*

*in collaboration with the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development Secretariat*

**22 October 2007, from 13:00h to 15:00h,  
at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC)**

*This is a Side Event during the Fifth Meeting of the Africa Committee on Sustainable Development (ACSD-5)/Regional Implementation Meeting (RIM) for CSD-16 Addis Ababa, 22-25 October 2007 on Transforming African Agriculture and Rural Economy for Sustainable Development*

## **AGENDA**

Opening and Welcome

Roadmap to CSD 16

- Presentation of the Organisation of Work of CSD
- Women Major Group Discussion Paper (Assessing JPOI)
- Identification of emerging messages by themes
- Preparation of national and regional policy positions (RIM resource person)
- Timeline on Priority Activities
- Participation at CSD 2008-2009

Tools and Skills Building Needs for Advocacy, Negotiation and Facilitation

The Plan of the Week

- Organization of women's caucus and special events at CSD-16
- Drafting discussion paper
- Immediate Next Steps

Closing

**We would like to express our gratitude to Heifer International and the CSD Secretariat for making this event possible.**

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<sup>i</sup> This was despite that organisers were not able to serve lunch due to the rule of the conference facilities.

<sup>ii</sup> According to Joan Kagwanja, Economic Affairs Officer of the UN ECA Food Security & SD Division, this is the first request received by the Secretariat.