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## Realizing women's economic empowerment in rural areas through cooperatives and micro-enterprises

### *Experiences from LDCs, SIDS and middle income Countries*

High-level ministerial event at the Commission on the Status of Women  
United Nations Headquarters, New York  
**16 March 2016, 11.00 – 12.45**  
**Ex-Press Bar (GA Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor)**

*A light buffet will be served starting from 10.30*  
*Photo opportunity at 11.00*

**Moderator:** Chernor Bah, Population Council

#### Welcoming remarks

- ◆ Mrs Emma Bonino, Special Envoy to CSW60, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Italy
- ◆ H.E. Mrs. Bassima Hakkaoui, Minister of Solidarity, Woman, Family and Social Development, Morocco
- ◆ Mrs Pauline Soaki, Director Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs, Solomon Islands
- ◆ H.E. Mr. Sukhbold Sukhee, Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the UN
- ◆ H.E. Peter Thomson, Permanent Representative of Fiji to the UN

#### Panelists

- ◆ Esther Lungu, First Lady of the Republic of Zambia
- ◆ Elisa Fernandez, Fund of Gender Equality, UNWOMEN
- ◆ Amy Coughenour-Betancourt, International Co-operative Alliance
- ◆ Monica Parrella, Director General of the Department for Equal Opportunities, Italy
- ◆ Fatoumata Doumbia, AGILE International - Action to Generate and Integrate the Local Economy, Mali

#### Q&A

## Background

Women's economic empowerment is a catalyst and prerequisite for sustainable development. Enhancing women's economic development can boost the economic growth, promote social development for women and the entire population, cushion climate change impacts, and help reduce poverty levels. More broadly realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets. Particularly in economically fragile countries, the experience of women in the agricultural sector and in the cooperatives can be critical to shaping an economic development model based on micro-entrepreneurship with a human dimension. Rural women are vital to the success of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly the goal to end poverty in all its forms everywhere, end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture as well as one on achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. To this end, financing the gender agenda is central. Among others, affirmative action programs are needed to ensure that women can access credit in order to enhance their opportunities to work in the private sector and succeed as entrepreneurs. Ultimately, encouraging women economic empowerment will help the realization of Agenda 2030 and create a conducive environment for sustainable peace.

## Main objectives

- ◆ Present concrete examples of successful stories of women's economic empowerment, in particular in rural areas
- ◆ Discuss on how to ensure the sustainability of women's economic empowerment programs
- ◆ Encourage exchange of ideas and concrete proposals on how gender equality in economic opportunities can accelerate the implementation of Agenda 2030

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**To register, please click [here](#). For inquiries tel +1 646 840 5310  
Interpretation service to French and Spanish will be provided**