

United Nations Forum on Forests 12th Session
Farmers and Small Forest Landowners Major Group statement on
Implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030:
SDG 2 Food Security and SDG5 Gender Equality
Delivered by the International Family Forestry Alliance (IFFA), 3rd May 2017

Madame Moderator,

Thank you. I would like to make a link between food security and yesterday's gender equality.

The Farmers and Small Forest Landowners Major Group, represented by International Family Forest Alliance, IFFA, supports the proposed improvement of achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. Without women societies go on only with a half of power. Educating women as well as giving them equal right to work and to own property promote families' welfare and improve prosperity in communities.

Human's biological gender is specified at birth but at the core of equality there has always been social gender. Social gender is highly effected by community's traditions, values and expectations. Therefore roles, tasks, rights and duties which are peculiar to women and men are learned and they can be influenced.

A piece of good news is that gender equality has improved during the last years. However, too many girls and women miss out on education, opportunities to work for salary and right of decision. For instance, in developing countries women do almost the half of farm and forest works. Yet, women are not able to buy and own land, cattle or work force nor they can get education, technology and financing. FAO has calculated that if women had equal possibilities to land and land crops developing countries could increase their harvest which would reduce famine in the world about 15 percent.

As employees and entrepreneurs, women are in a weaker situation than men: in many countries women are not able to work in similar fields as men, women's salaries are not as good as men's and women's protection against arbitrary dismissal is worse than men's. It is also harder for women to get financing for their business. World Bank has, however, pointed out that getting rid of hindrances for women to have opportunities to work productivity of work arises. The "gender gap" reduces women's productivity as well as it diminishes women's contributions to agriculture and forestry sectors.

Without influence it is hard to change anything: equality provides also actions from men. In many communities and homes men decide of women's education, working, moving, health care, using of money and number of children. Rarely women are seen as head of states or companies. Unfortunately, often women themselves also support traditional gender roles. Nonetheless, those women's families where both genders are equal are smaller, healthier and have more education which all are better for societies development.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Gender equality reduces poverty and deaths of both mothers and children, gives more possibilities to education and supports environment's sustainable development. Therefore, it is extremely important that action in order to achieve gender equality are taking.