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News Release

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INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES IN ROME TOGETHER COMMEMORATE WOMEN’S DAY WITH COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENTS FOR ACHIEVING WORLD WIDE GENDER EQUITY

ROME – Leaders of international organizations based in Rome today gathered to highlight the achievements and the real prospects for achieving gender equality. The speakers all agreed accelerating the empowerment of women everywhere is fundamental to achieving a zero hunger world and reaching the world’s new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The dialogue, *‘Planet 50:50: Step It Up for Gender Equality & Zero Hunger’*, was jointly organized by the [Food and Agriculture Organization](#) (FAO), the [International Fund for Agricultural Development](#) (IFAD), the [World Food Programme](#) (WFP) and the [International Development Law Organization](#) (IDLO).

This event commemorating International Women’s Day also brought together partners from the private sector, youth forums, civil society and NGOs. Building broad-based partnerships is vital to implementing and maintaining the momentum required for achieving the global goals by the 2030 deadline - including gender equality. Welcoming guests at WFP headquarters, Executive Director Ertharin Cousin reminded everyone that “stepping up” on gender is not only a moral imperative but crucial to eradicating hunger.

“When given equal access to education and opportunities, women will exceed and their families and communities will thrive. With equitable access to the requisite resources, women will solve the beleaguering problems of hunger and malnutrition - changing our world for the better. Leaving this event, we must each ask ourselves what step must I take, both today and throughout the year, to ensure I will make a difference for girls by removing a barrier or opening a door?” said Cousin.

“Women and girls are critical to rural development. Empowering them generates major gains. It allows them to become strong leaders. To participate equally, freely and take bold decisions. Our commitment to them today is a crucial key to our commitment to achieving

the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda,” said Maria-Helena Semedo, FAO Deputy Director-General, Coordinator for Natural Resources.

Five of the goals correspond more specifically to the mandates of the international agencies in Rome: SDG 1 – End poverty in all its forms everywhere; SDG 2 – End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; SDG 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; SDG 16 - Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies and SDG 17 - Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

“We will not reach the sustainable development goals without more forceful and urgent efforts to achieve gender equality, particularly in rural areas,” said Josefina Stubbs, Associate Vice-President, Strategy and Knowledge Department, IFAD. “The commitment world leaders have made to leave no one behind and to build a world free of poverty and hunger is really a commitment to empowering women, regardless of their economic status, educational background or religion.”

“Women’s status in society and often before the law makes them more vulnerable to discrimination leading to negative impacts on themselves, their families and their communities,” said Elena Incisa di Camerana, Regional Program Manager for Latin America and the Caribbean at IDLO. “Ensuring everyone can enjoy access to justice and the benefits of the rule of law are critical to the success of all Goals in the 2030 Agenda, whether the focus is on curbing poverty, hunger, inequalities or equality for women and girls.”

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