



Lao People's Democratic Republic
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity
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Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

No:/MAF

Vientiane capital, date: 17 MAR 2009

The Vientiane Resolution on Women in Agriculture Extension 16-17 December 2008

Introduction

The Conference on Women in Agriculture Extension held in Vientiane, 16-17 December 2008, attended by 180 participants coming from a range of Government, Civil Society and Private Sector Organizations have reached the following agreements:

Noting that the Beijing Platform for Action calls for Governments to "Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels", to "Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development" and to "Strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women", and especially to "Provide technical assistance to women, particularly in developing countries, in the sectors of agriculture, fisheries, small enterprises, trade and industry to ensure the continuing promotion of human resource development and the development of environmentally sound technologies and of women's entrepreneurship";

Noting that the Convention on the Elimination of All Form of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), to which Lao PDR is State Party, states in article 14 that "States Parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy", and "shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development";

Applauding the importance that the Government of Lao PDR has given to the development of women, and recognizing in article 7 of the Law on Development and Protection of Women that it is "necessary in order to enable women to participate actively in all aspects of politics, the economy, culture and society, environmental protection, national defence and security, and foreign affairs so as to increase the effectiveness of national defence and development";

Acknowledging that the Lao PDR National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES) contains a gender strategy that includes: "Affirmative action concerning staffing of provincial and district staff, including extension workers" and "Gender focal points in villages to promote improved agricultural practices";

Acknowledging the significance that is increasingly given by governments, development agencies and civil society organizations around the world to the issue of women in agriculture sector, and that in particular the Lao Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has undertaken activities for gender-mainstreaming with respect to the five priority projects for the achievement the thirteen measures and four goals of the Ministry namely:

1. Food security;
2. Production of commodities;
3. Stabilization of shifting cultivation and
4. Sustainable management of forestry resources

And recognizing the need for development partners to work together to promote women's empowerment in agriculture and forestry in Lao PDR

Agreements of the conference

We believe that wider participation of women is required at all levels of society, in all parts of the country, and with respect to developments in all sectors and in particular in agriculture and forestry development:

1. Increase the number of women who will be trained in agriculture and forestry technical skills by at least 15% per year.
2. Have a specific land allocation policy for poorest families especially for women headed households.
3. Support and increase the number of female farmers and technicians involved in agricultural development activities to the level of 30-50%.
4. Support the empowerment of the women and the advancement of gender in the agriculture and forestry sector.

We commit ourselves to working together in order to improve the participation and empowerment of the women in their own development, and to support the Government and its development partners to this end;

We draw attention to the need to implement the principles of the Lao Extension Approach, in particular the concept of inclusiveness as summarized in the slogan used by the National Agricultural and Forestry Extension Service (NAFES) "Extension for everyone – and everyone has a role to play in development".

With the aim of improving empowerment of women in agriculture and forestry development, *we agree to undertake the following actions*, both within our individual organizations and collaboratively:

- a) Promote awareness of the law and regulations and policy as it relate to women's issues, especially the "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)", The law on Development and Protection for Women, Human Rights Declarations and other treaties;
- b) In the planning and implementation of extension activities, we will take into account that men and women play different roles in agricultural production, and that they face different constraints and opportunities in getting access to resources and services; information; and gender statistics;

- c) We will make use of gender-disaggregated data in the planning and monitoring of agricultural development activities, and pay special efforts to determinate the impact of these activities on women;
- d) We will take steps to ensure that women are directly involved at all stages in the process of identifying, testing and disseminating agricultural technologies that are relevant to their needs and interests;
- e) We will advocate and support the active participation of women in a full range of roles associated with rural development, including: as members and leaders of farmer groups and associations, as volunteers and paid staff in the extension system, as traders, processors and entrepreneurs engaged in agribusiness, and as researchers, project managers and policy makers in the agriculture sector;
- f) We will discourage the use of selection criteria that contributes to the exclusion of women from extension activities, such as literacy level, educational attainment, health care, land ownership and status as head of household;
- g) We will study and promote methodologies that lead to greater participation and benefits for rural women including, where necessary, the organisation of separate groups and separate activities for women;

1. The central-level implementation plans:

- Review strategic plans for organizations at all levels (within 1 month), which will be implemented by Sub- Commissions for Advancement of Women (Sub-CAW), Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF);
- Improvement of mechanism, central- local implementation within 6 months and a year, which will be implemented by Sub-CAW/MAF and all relevant organizations within agriculture and forestry sector from the central to cluster of village level (Khoum Ban);
- Information (media creation) operated by NAFES, NAFRI and Department Of Planning (DOP);
- Capacity building, Training of Trainer for NAFES, study tour, workshops seminar, training on gender for the officials at central and provincial levels.

2. The provincial-level implementation plans:

- Upgrade women on techniques for agriculture development (TOT) for provincial staff (male and female) (2 times per year, for at least 2-3 years - the central trainer will be responsible). The budget will be provided by projects and the government, and will be monitored by the provincial committees and NAFES;
- Training of trainer (TOT) on agriculture extension techniques for district, and sub-district level (Training for district official staff 2 times per year). The budget will be provided by the projects and government, and monitored by the provincial and district staff;
- Upgrade the provincial staff for long-term (Bachelor or Master Degree) for women sector (at least 2-3 persons per year). It will be responsibility of both domestic and abroad universities. The budget will be provided by the government and international organizations, monitored by the provincial level;
- Politics training for the provincial staff (3, 6, 15 months – it will be responsibility of the provincial politics schools). The budget will be requested to the government and monitored by the provincial level;

- Skills-Training for the provincial female staff (2 weeks - responsibility by the national university). The budget will be provided by the project and the government, and monitored by the provincial level;
- Training on gender: basics on gender, gender mainstreaming, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Human Rights treaties for provincial staff for 5 weeks (2-3 times per year - technical support from LWU, Lao NCAW, Projects). The budget will receive support from the government agencies and projects, and monitored by Lao NCAW;
- Research training for provincial staff (1 time per year at least 3 years – it will be responsibility of NAFRI, and monitored by the provincial institute);
- Foreign languages training and computer skill training for the provincial women staff (2-3 times per year, for at least 2 years – it will be responsibility of the projects). The budget will be requested from the projects, and monitored by the trainers and provincial staff;
- Training on food processing and marketing for the provincial staff (one week training, 2 times per year, at least 2-3 years. The training will be responsibility by the National University and Khonkaen University). The budget will be requested to the projects, and monitored by the trainers;
- Training on micro finance and study tour for the provincial staff (1 week training, 1 time per year. The training will be responsibility of the National University, Khonkaen University). The budget will be supported from the projects, and monitored by the trainers.
- Study tour/Knowledge exchange about agriculture technique for provincial staff, both national and international (1 week trip, 1 time per year. The training will be responsibility of the National University, Khonkaen University). The budget will be requested from the projects, and monitored by the trainers and provincial staff;
- Media creation about gender issues, model women on radio broadcast, television and the provincial magazine for the publicity (2 days per week - it will be responsibility of the Provincial Women Union, Sub-CAW of the province and information and culture provincial department). The budget will be provided by the development projects, and monitored by the Provincial Women Union, Sub-CAW of the province;
- Creation of the data base in provincial level, including lists of women, roles and duties for Sub-CAW of the province, (responsibility of Sub- NCAW in cooperation with agriculture and forest department). The budget will be provided by the provincial level, and monitored by provincial Women Union, Sub-CAW of the province and Agriculture and Forestry department;
- Awards/prize for model women of agriculture extension at provincial level (1 time a year) with the responsibility of Provincial leadership, the agriculture development department and Sub-CAW at the provincial level. The budget will be requested to the provincial level, and monitored by Sub-CAW, Provincial Women Union and the agriculture and forestry department.

3. The district-level implementation plans:

- Awareness the gender policies for the district and village level (from February to March 2009);
- Training on technical and skills in pig raising (Mou khoun) for the district and village levels (in February 2009), Training System of Rice Intensification (SRI) plantation techniques for the district and village levels

(from April to May 2009 - responsibility of the central level and district staff);

- Study tour on pig raising for the district and village levels in April and study tour System of Rice Intensification (SRI) plantation technique for the district and village levels in September. These activities will be responsibility of district staff.

4. The Implementation plans of the farmers:

- Training on Gender for head of the households (both men and women - from January to February, 2009), with the responsibility of the Women's Union at the district level and LEAP with the objectives:
 - Men and women will have a knowledge and understanding on gender and
 - Husband and wife have equal rights;
- Training on organic agriculture technique for the producer (women and men - starting from January 2009), with the responsibility of the District Women's Union, District extension staff, and LEAP. The benefits from implementing the activities are that people have more knowledge and understanding about gender roles;
- Monitoring after two training (about 6 months later). The responsibility will be by the District Women's Union, District extension staff, and LEAP. The objective of the monitoring will be to improve the quality of products.
- Marketing and fund raising training for the group of farmers (both women and men, starting from January 2009), - responsibility by the farmers, District Women Union, District agriculture extension and LEAP. The result of the training will be to improve the knowledge on marketing and income generating activities;
- Study tour between groups' activities (for the both women and men) during the raining season (June to October 2009). The responsibility will be by District Women's Union, District extension staff, and LEAP. The result from the study tour is to improve the knowledge and skills and improve the quality of their own activities.

Remark

For implementation, each relevant organization at all levels must develop detail plans and projects, and look for appropriate funding sources.

Vice Minister of Agriculture and Forestry,
Head of Sub-Commission for the Advancement of women


Dr. Ty Phommaseck