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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter

Women's rights and the right to food

Summary

In the present report, submitted to the Human Rights Council in accordance with Council resolution 13/4, the Special Rapporteur on the right to food discusses the threats to women's right to food, identifying the areas that demand the most urgent attention. The report examines successively the obstacles women face in access to employment, social protection and the productive resources needed for food production, food processing and value chain development. It ends with a recommendation to States to effectively respond to women and girls' needs and priorities in their food security strategies and to relieve women's unpaid work burden in the household, while at the same time address the specific constraints women face and transforming the existing gendered division of roles.

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I. Introduction

1. Women's rights are protected through a range of human rights instruments. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights provides for the right to an adequate standard of living, including the right to food, to be guaranteed without discrimination (art. 2, para. 1). A non-discrimination requirement is also imposed under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, both in the enjoyment of the rights listed in the Covenant (art. 2, para. 1) and in other spheres of life (art. 26). Moreover, both Covenants, in their respective article 3, oblige States Parties to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of their civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women guarantees equality of treatment between women and men in a range of areas; it has a specific provision on women in rural areas, guaranteeing the rights of women to equal treatment, in particular, in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes (art. 14). The Convention also guarantees adequate nutrition for women during pregnancy and lactation (art. 12). The Convention on the Rights of the Child, which sets out rights that should be guaranteed without discrimination (art. 2, para. 1), also refers to the duty of States to protect the right to health of the child, inter alia, by the promotion of breastfeeding (art. 24, para. 2 (e)).

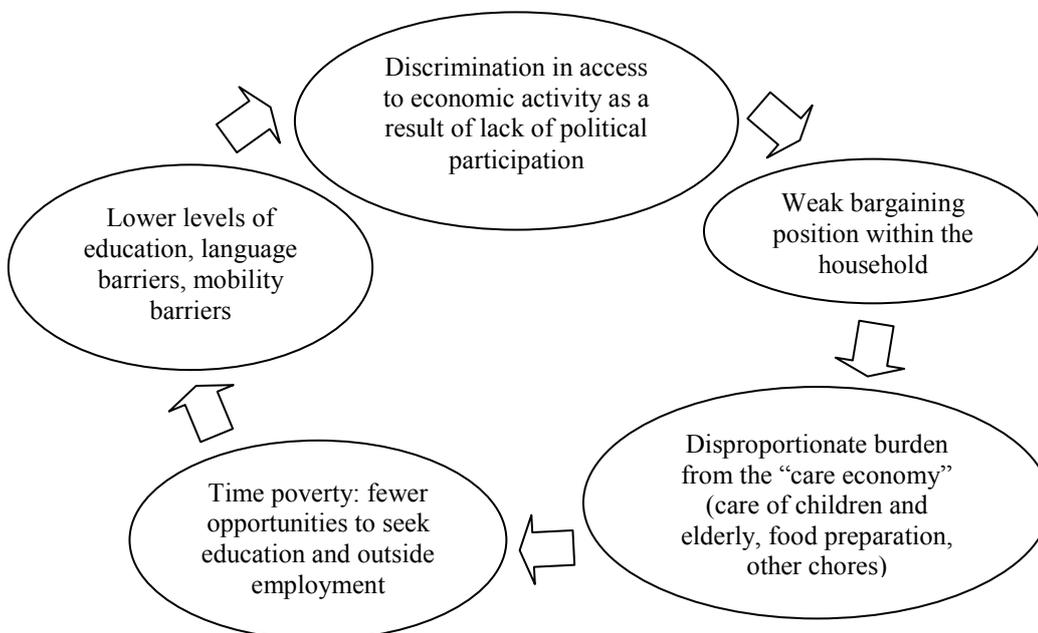
2. Despite these requirements, discrimination against women remains pervasive in all spheres of life. It may result from laws that are themselves discriminatory. More often however, the discrimination women face is the result of social norms or customs, linked to certain stereotypes about gender roles; unequal access to productive resources such as land and to economic opportunities, such as decent wage employment; unequal bargaining position within the household; gendered division of labor within households, that result both in time poverty for women and in lower levels of education; and women's marginalization from decision-making spheres at all levels. Only by addressing these different levels, including by challenging the existing distribution of family responsibilities between women and men, shall the root causes of discrimination women face be effectively addressed.

3. The various forms of discrimination discussed in this report are interrelated. Disempowerment of women results in women facing discrimination as economic agents. This in turn means women are less economically independent, are exposed to violence and have a weaker bargaining position within the household and the community. As a result, they continue to assume a highly unequal share of tasks and family responsibilities within the household – taking care of the children and the elderly or the sick, fetching wood and water, buying and preparing the food. This "care economy" for which they remain chiefly responsible results in time poverty for women. Women work more hours than men, although much of the work they perform remains informal, essentially performed within the family, and unremunerated, and thus is neither valued nor even recognized.¹ This leads to lower levels of education for women, and in an inability to seek better employment opportunities outside the home. They may also be discouraged from improving their qualifications because of the lack of such opportunities, due to the discrimination they are confronted with in the labour market. This may further feed into negative prejudices about

¹ In middle-income countries, unpaid care work would represent the equivalent of 15 per cent of the GDP if it were to be valued in monetary terms; the figure is 35 per cent for low-income countries. If this unpaid care work were to be financed by the public purse, it would represent 94 per cent of the total tax revenue of South Korea, and 182 per cent of the total tax revenue of India (D. Budlender, ed., *Time Use Studies and Unpaid Care Work*, London, Routledge, 2010).

their ability to perform as well as men. The lack of recognition of reproductive rights is part of this cycle: marrying early means having children early, and having to take care of them, even though this may interrupt the education of the mother, or make it impossible or difficult for her to seek employment. It is this cycle of discrimination that must be broken.

The cycle of discrimination



4. These various forms of discrimination against women and girls are human rights violations that States have a duty to combat. They affect directly the right to food of women and girls. They also have impacts on the right to food of others through three pathways. First, discrimination against pregnant women and women of child-bearing age has intergenerational consequences. Maternal and child undernutrition affect the learning performance of children, and their incomes as adults thus depend on the quality of their nutrition as young infants, during the 1,000-day window during pregnancy and until the second birthday. The disadvantage of poor nutrition during pregnancy or early childhood is also carried over from one generation to the next: a woman who has been poorly fed as an infant will have children with a lower birthweight.²

5. Second, socially constructed gender roles and the weak bargaining position of women within households result in a situation in which they may not be able to decide to which priorities the household budget should go. Yet, because men are currently insufficiently sensitized to the importance of caring for children and for their nutrition needs in particular, the nutrition, health and education of children significantly improve when women are enabled to make such decisions. Research shows that a child's chances of

² A. Ashworth, "Effects of intrauterine growth retardation on mortality and morbidity in infants and young children," *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, vol. 52, Supp. 1 (Jan. 1998), S34-42; C.G. Victoria et al., "Maternal and Child Undernutrition 2: Maternal and child undernutrition: Consequences for adult health and human capital," Published online 17 January 2008 (DOI:10.1016/S0140-6736(07)61692-4).

survival increase by 20 per cent when the mother controls the household budget.³ Improving the education of women and, thus, their economic opportunities, not only can make a substantial contribution to a country's economic growth,⁴ it is also the single most important determinant of food insecurity. A cross-country study of developing countries covering the period 1970-1995 found that 43 per cent of the reduction of hunger was attributable to the progress of women's education, almost as much as increased food availability (26 per cent) and improvements to the health environment (19 per cent) during that period combined. An additional 12 per cent of the reduction of hunger were attributable to increased life expectancy of women, so that we owe in total 55 per cent of the gains against hunger during those 25 years to an improvement of women's situation within societies.⁵

6. Third, discrimination against women as food producers is not only a violation of their rights, it also has society-wide consequences, because of the considerable productivity losses entailed. Access to productive resources such as land, inputs, technology and services are decisive in explaining the difference in yields between male and female smallholders; the greater ability for men to command labor, both from (unremunerated) family members and from other members of the community, also plays a role. Evidence suggests that countries where women lack land ownership rights or access to credit have on average 60 per cent and 85 per cent more malnourished children, respectively.⁶ Moreover, according to a recent review, 79 per cent of existing studies on fertilizer, seed varieties, tools, and pesticide use concluded that men have higher access to these inputs.⁷ One study in Burkina Faso found productivity on female-managed plots in Burkina Faso to be 30 per cent lower than on male-managed plots within the same household because labour and fertilizer were more intensively applied on men's plots.⁸ Yet, the literature also shows that with equal access to inputs, yields for men and women are very similar.⁹ In 2010, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concluded that "if women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20–30 percent. This could raise total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5–4 percent, which could in turn reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12–17 percent".¹⁰

7. Access to food can be secured (i) by obtaining incomes from employment or self-employment; (ii) by social transfers; or (iii) by own production, for individuals who have access to land and other productive inputs. This report examines how, at each of these

³ M. Walsh, *Women in Food Aid Interventions: Impacts and Issues, Time for Change: Food Aid and Development* (Rome, WFP, 23–24 October 1998).

⁴ D. Abu-Ghaida and S. Klasen, "The costs of missing the Millennium Development Goals on gender equity", *World Development*, vol. 32, No. 7 (2004), pp. 1075–1107.

⁵ L.C. Smith and L. Haddad, *Explaining child malnutrition in developing countries: A cross-country analysis*, Research Report 111 (Washington, D.C., IFPRI, 2000).

⁶ OECD Development Centre, *Atlas of Gender and Development. How Social Norms Affect Gender Equality in Non-OECD Countries* (Paris, OECD, 2010); The Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Women's economic empowerment to foster food security: case studies from developing countries* (The Hague, 2011).

⁷ A. Peterman et al., *A Review of Empirical Evidence on Gender Differences in Nonland Agricultural Inputs, Technology, and Services in Developing Countries* (Washington, D.C., IFPRI, 2010), p. 6.

⁸ C. Udry, "Gender, agricultural production, and the theory of the household", *Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 104, No. 5 (1996), pp. 1010–1046.

⁹ C. Udry et al., "Gender differentials in farm productivity: implications for household efficiency and agricultural policy", *Food Policy*, vol. 20, No. 5 (2005), pp. 407–423.

¹⁰ FAO, *The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-11. Women in Agriculture* (Rome, 2010) (hereafter SOFA 2010), p. 40.

levels, women face discrimination and marginalization, with negative impacts both for them and for society as a whole. Rural women in particular deserve greater attention in food security strategies:¹¹ they fare worse than rural men and urban women and men on all development indicators.¹² Chapter II considers women's access to incomes through employment, both on- and off-farm; chapter III considers women's access to social protection; chapter IV examines the role of women as food producers; and chapter V outlines a strategy to eliminate discrimination against women and girls based on human rights, that seeks to take into account the complexities described in the preceding parts. Chapter VI contains a single recommendation to each State, to design and implement, without delay, a strategy as outlined in chapter V. The Special Rapporteur concludes that the empowerment of women should be at the centre of food security strategies, both in order to guarantee the right to food of women, and because it is the most cost-effective measure to reduce hunger and malnutrition for all. Resource constraints cannot justify further delays in doing so.

II. Women's access to employment

A. Women as waged agricultural workers

8. In previous reports, the Special Rapporteur has explained the obstacles that farmworkers face in enjoying their right to adequate food (see A/HRC/13/33, paras. 10-27). But women farmworkers, who represent 20 to 30 per cent of the approximately 450 million people employed worldwide as waged agricultural workers (the proportion is higher, at around 40 per cent, in Latin America and the Caribbean),¹³ face specific difficulties.

9. Women are disproportionately represented in the "periphery" part of the workforce that coexists with the "core" segment of permanently employed farmworkers. This "periphery" segment of the workforce is made of unskilled workers, often without a formal contract of employment, and their work is often seasonal or temporary (or classified as such even when it is in fact continuous). The main reason why women are disproportionately represented in this segment is because they have fewer alternative options and are thus 'easier' to exploit.

10. In addition, it is not unusual for the remuneration in this "periphery" segment to be calculated on a piece-rate basis, based on how much of the task has been accomplished. This mode of calculation of the wage is advantageous to the employer; it generally means that the employer does not provide benefits or social security in addition to the wage earned, and it is a method of calculating wages that is self-enforcing and requires much less supervision. Yet, though the most efficient women sometimes benefit, this mode of calculation of wages may be unfavourable to women in the heavier tasks, where the pay is calculated on the basis of male productivity standards. In addition, it encourages workers,

¹¹ In recognition of this, and based on art. 14 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Supreme Court of Nepal ordered the adoption of a policy for Nepalese rural women in a verdict of 11 June 2010 (Case 064-wo-186, *Advocate Jyoti Lamsal Poudel vs. Government of Nepal*). This is a welcome development that other courts could emulate.

¹² Inter-Agency Task Force on Rural Women, "Rural women and the Millennium Development Goals," Fact sheet (2012); see also Decision 50/VI, General statement of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on rural women, adopted 19 October 2011 (A/67/38, part II, annex II). The Committee is currently considering a general recommendation on rural women.

¹³ FAC-ILO-IUF (Peter Hurst et al.), *Agricultural workers and their contribution to sustainable agriculture and rural development* (Geneva, 2007), p. 32.

especially women, to have their children work with them as "helpers", in order to perform the task faster. The result is that about 70 per cent of child labour in the world is in agriculture, representing approximately 132 million girls and boys aged 5–14 (A/HRC/13/33, para. 10).

11. Women also are subject to other forms of discrimination, including refusal by employers to hire women who are pregnant, leading seasonal pregnant workers to sometimes hide their pregnancy in order to maintain their access to income. They are particularly exposed to violence and harassment because of their impossibility to move away from the plantation.¹⁴

12. Finally, women may face specific difficulties in reconciling their responsibilities in the care economy, particularly as regards the minding and educating of children of pre-school age, and their work on farms. The lack of access to child-care services in rural areas, combined with poor transportation services, sometimes leads women to bring the children with them on the plantation, as has been documented in the horticultural sector in Punjab, Pakistan,¹⁵ or in the informal settlements established near the plantations during the working season, as in South Africa.¹⁶

13. A number of the issues that in practice are of particular concern to women could be addressed in principle through effective policies and laws, and collective bargaining. These include equality of opportunity policies, equal pay for work of equal value, maternity leave and benefits, child care issues, reproductive health services. However, apart from the general problems related to unionization on farms, male-dominated unions do not always pay sufficient attention to issues that matter especially to women. Male union representatives may fail to consider the gender implications of apparently neutral issues for collective bargaining, including how wages are determined, leave, overtime, or bonus systems since these often in reality impact on women and men differently.¹⁷ To address this problem, the International Union of Food and Agricultural Workers (IUF) has for example produced a gender-equality guide and aims at a 40 per cent representation of women on all its committees.¹⁸

B. Women's access to off-farm employment

14. Women's access to employment in the industry or the services sectors of the economy requires improved access to education for girls; and infrastructural and services investments that relieve women from part of the burden of the household chores that women shoulder disproportionately. Millennium Development Goal 1, on the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, includes a target (1.B) to "achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people," an implicit recognition that women, due to discrimination and lack of educational opportunities, are generally disadvantaged in access to employment. In September 2010, Heads of State and

¹⁴ Human Rights Watch, *Ripe with Abuse. Human Rights Conditions in South Africa's Fruit and Wine Industries* (2011), p. 29.

¹⁵ K.K. Gill, "Diversification of agriculture and women's employment in Punjab", *Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, vol. 44, No. 2 (2001), pp. 259-267.

¹⁶ S. Barrientos and A. Kritzinger, "Global value chains and poverty: The case of contract labour in South Africa fruit," Conference on Globalisation, Growth and (In)equality, University of Warwick, 15–17 March 2002.

¹⁷ FAO-ILO-IUF (Peter Hurst et al.), *Agricultural workers and their contribution to sustainable agriculture and rural development* (Geneva, 2007), p. 46.

¹⁸ FAO-IFAD-ILO, *Gender dimensions of agricultural and rural employment: Differentiated pathways out of poverty* (Rome, 2010), p. 15.

Government at the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals pledged to invest in "infrastructure and labour-saving technologies, especially in rural areas, benefiting women and girls by reducing their burden of domestic activities, affording the opportunity for girls to attend school and women to engage in self-employment or participate in the labour market," as well as to remove "barriers and expanding support for girls' education through measures such as providing free primary education, a safe environment for schooling and financial assistance such as scholarships and cash transfer programmes".¹⁹

15. Improving access to education for girls requires that the incentives structures for families be changed, and that social and cultural norms that lead parents to interrupt the schooling of girls earlier than that of boys be challenged. Many poor households are unable to send girls to school because of the costs, both direct and indirect (school fees or other costs related to attending school, such as uniforms and books), of doing so; because of opportunity costs (girls who go to school are not available to work within the household); because of the commute involved, when the family lives at a far distance from the nearest school, and associated security concerns. The absence of separate sanitation facilities for girls in schools can also be a major obstacle.

16. Various programmes have proven to be effective in removing some of these obstacles. Bangladesh launched the Female Secondary School Assistance Project (FSSAP) in 1993; ten years later, as it entered its second phase, the project covered one quarter of rural Bangladesh and now benefits almost one million girls across the country in more than 6,000 schools.²⁰ FSSAP provides a stipend to girls who agree to delay marriage until they complete secondary education, for a total cost to the programme of about US\$121 per year per person; and it has improved sanitation facilities in schools. It has spectacularly succeeded in improving girls' school attendance rates.

17. Another successful example is the female school stipend programme introduced by the Government of Punjab, Pakistan, in 2004, as part of the broader Punjab Education Sector Reform Programme (PESRP), inaugurated in 2003. In targeted districts defined by their low literacy rate, the female school stipend programme provides girls a stipend (an amount slightly higher than the average cost of schooling), conditional on class attendance. An early study of the impacts of this stipend found a modest but statistically significant impact on girls' attendance of schools.²¹

18. School-feeding programmes can also make a significant contribution to improving access to education for girls, with impacts ranging from 19 to 38 per cent in increased female school attendance, according to certain cross-country studies.²² The provision of take-home rations to pupils can be particularly effective in this respect, especially where markets are unreliable or prices of essential food commodities highly volatile, or where the capacity of the schools to provide meals is limited. In Pakistan, the provision of take-home rations to girls attending school for at least 20 days a month made overall enrolment grow

¹⁹ General assembly resolution 65/1, Keeping the promise: United to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, para. 72 (e).

²⁰ J. Ambler et al., "Strengthening Women's Assets and Status: Programs Improving Poor Women's Lives", 2020 Focus Brief on the World's Poor and Hungry People (Washington, D.C., IFPRI, 2007).

²¹ N. Chaudhury and D. Parajuli, "Conditional Cash Transfers and Female Schooling: The Impact of the Female School Stipend Program on Public School Enrollments in Punjab, Pakistan", World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4102 (December 2006).

²² R. Khera, "Mid-day meals in primary schools: Achievements and challenges", *Economic and political weekly*, vol. 41, No. 46 (2006), pp. 4742–4750.

by 135 percent from 1998-99 to 2003-04.²³ In Afghanistan, school enrolment has increased significantly since the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001, though – due to cultural norms, lack of sanitation facilities and the security situation – the enrolment of girls in schools as compared to boys remains very low (at 0.35 in 2008).²⁴ WFP seeks to bridge this gap by distributing a monthly ration of 3.7 litres of vegetable oil to girls, conditional upon a minimum school attendance of 22 days per month. In Malawi, the introduction into the school-feeding programme of take-home rations of 12.5 kg of maize per month for girls and double orphans attending at least 80 per cent of school days led to a 37.7 per cent increase in girls' enrolment. In Lao People's Democratic Republic, where girls' enrolment can be very low, particularly in rural areas and within some ethnic groups, pupils receive a take-home family ration of canned fish, rice and iodized salt as an incentive for parents to send them to school. From 2002 to 2008, enrolment rates in primary schools benefiting from the programme increased from 60 percent to 88 percent for boys and from 53 percent to 84 percent for girls.²⁵

19. School-feeding programmes can also have important multiplier effects on the local economy. The above-mentioned study of the mid-day meals programme in India was found to create employment opportunities for poor women: in the sampled schools, more than two thirds of the cooks were women, often from underprivileged backgrounds. Ideally, under these programmes, priority should be given to disadvantaged persons when hiring, and living wages should be paid to the women employed through them. The local procurement of foods, and local processing, provides market opportunities for local food producers and service providers. In this regard, the Right to Food Guidelines recommends that States "consider the benefits of local procurement for food assistance that could integrate the nutritional needs of those affected by food insecurity and the commercial interests of local producers"²⁶. In Brazil, Act No. 11,947 of 16 June 2009 requires that the national school feeding programme (PNAE), benefiting 49 million children, source 30 per cent of its food from family farms. Linkages with public works programmes could also be encouraged, in which poor, unemployed women could be paid to cook meals in schools.

20. In addition to expanding their economic opportunities in later life, higher enrolment rates for girls delay marriage and can thus lower the number of children a woman has, therefore enabling more women to seek employment with higher incomes. Low levels of education and early marriage create a vicious cycle in which women have many children and thus reduced opportunities for improving their education and seeking employment outside the home. Higher levels of education means women can take control over their fertility and be able to make informed decisions in terms of their sexual health and family planning, resulting in fewer children and improved economic opportunities.²⁷

21. While improved access to education is essential to creating such economic opportunities for women, such efforts will only be effective in combination with other measures. These include active labour policies that gradually improve the representation of women in all sectors and break down the vertical and horizontal segmentation of the labour

²³ World Food Programme, *Learning from Experience. Good practices from 45 years of school feeding* (2012), p. 53.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 49 and 52.

²⁶ FAO, *Voluntary guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security* (Rome, 2005) (hereafter Right to Food Guidelines), guideline 14.2.

²⁷ O. Galor and D.N. Weil, "The Gender Gap, Fertility and Growth", *American Economic Review*, vol. 86, No. 3 (1996), pp. 374-387.

market where it exists, through positive action;²⁸ measures aimed at reconciling family and professional life, and access to employment for workers with family responsibilities, as stipulated in ILO Convention No. 156 (1981) on Workers with family responsibilities. Both of these measures should be combined with efforts to break down gender stereotypes, not only as regards the type of employment performed by women, but also as regard the allocation of responsibilities between women and men in the discharging of family responsibilities. Indeed, although more women than ever are gainfully employed, their share of family responsibilities has not diminished.

III. Women's access to social protection

22. The right to social security, as guaranteed under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, includes access to health care; benefits and services to persons without work-related income due to sickness, disability, maternity, employment injury, unemployment, old age or death of a family member, including contributory or non-contributory pensions for all older persons; family and child support sufficient to cover food, clothing, housing, water and sanitation; survivor and orphan benefits.²⁹ The Special Rapporteur observes that, in many cases, the specific situation of women is not considered in the design and implementation of programmes. Three examples may serve to illustrate this.

A. Social transfer programmes³⁰

23. Most social transfer programmes are in the form of cash transfer programmes which can be conditional or unconditional. Unconditional cash transfer programmes correspond better to the idea that social protection is a human right that should benefit all those in need of income support. They reduce the risks of under-inclusion and may be easier to administer where the administrative capacity is weak. A comparison across three Latin American countries concluded that verifying compliance with conditionalities represented 18 per cent of the administrative costs of the programme, and 2 per cent of the total costs.³¹

24. However, partly because of concerns with the fiscal sustainability of unconditional cash transfer programs, and partly in order to encourage poor families to invest more in their children and thus reduce the inter-generational transmission of poverty, conditional cash transfers (CCTs) have been expanding in recent years. Such CCTs generally target certain poor regions and, within those regions, poor households. They generally provide cash or sometimes nutritional supplements, usually to the mother or primary caregiver, provided certain conditions are met. These conditions relate most often to children's school enrolment and attendance level, and attendance at pre- and postnatal health-care appointments to ensure that children receive appropriate vaccinations and to check their growth. In previous mission reports, the Special Rapporteur discussed the well-known CCTs that have been launched in Mexico (*Progresar/Oportunidades*) and in Brazil (*Bolsa*

²⁸ See Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, art. 4, para. 1, which provides for "special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women."

²⁹ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, general comment No. 19 (2008) on the right to social security.

³⁰ See also reports of the Independent expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty, focusing on social protection (A/HRC/14/31 and A/64/279).

³¹ N. Caldes et al., "The cost of poverty alleviation transfer programs: A comparative analysis of three programs in Latin America", *World Development*, vol. 34, No. 5 (2006), pp. 818-837.

Familia) (A/HRC/13/33/Add.6 and A/HRC/19/59/Add.2). An early example is Bangladesh's Female Secondary School Assistance Project (FSSAP) launched in 1993 (see para. 16 above), which was complemented, in July 2002, by the Primary Education Stipend Project (PESP). The PESP aimed to increase the educational participation (enrolment, continued attendance and educational performance) of primary school children from poor families throughout Bangladesh (initially estimated at more than 5 million pupils) by providing cash payments to targeted households. Despite significant targeting problems during its initial phase, the programme is credited for improving educational attainments.

25. Insofar as conditionalities can improve the educational attainments of girls, they should be welcomed. CCT benefits are usually given to women, as the "caregivers" of households – in Brazil, 94 per cent of the recipients of the *Bolsa Familia* transfers are women.³² This is expected to strengthen their negotiating role within the family, although such an outcome is far from automatic.³³ The Right to Food Guidelines recommend that States "give priority to channelling food assistance via women as a means of enhancing their decision-making role and ensuring that the food is used to meet the household's food requirements." (guideline 13.4). Beyond these aspects however, too little attention has been paid to the gender impacts of CCTs, when such programmes are put in place. Three concerns have emerged:

(a) The approach adopted by CCT programmes may reinforce gender stereotyped roles as women are prioritized as "mothers" and "caregivers", rather than empowered as equal to men. Women are relied upon to ensure that the household invests in children, leading some authors to claim that child-centered policies such as those illustrated by CCT programmes tend to sideline "the equality claims of adult women and attention to their needs [...] in favor of those of children, including girls."³⁴

(b) Conditionalities are sometimes designed in ways that do not sufficiently take into account the time constraints that women face, in that it is usually the women who are expected to ensure that the conditionalities are met, especially as regards regular visits to health-care centres.

(c) Where compliance with the conditionalities requires women to leave the household, it may present an opportunity for them to obtain information about their rights and about practices that can improve nutritional outcomes within their household, and enable them to broaden their social network. But the cultural norms that reduce the mobility of women and their time poverty could make their participation in such programmes impossible.

B. Public works programmes

26. Public works programmes are designed to provide employment to families who have no other source of income; remuneration is usually in the form of cash (cash-for-work) or food (food-for-work), or a combination of both. Because the work is demanding and the

³² R. Holmes and N. Jones, "Rethinking social protection using a gender lens." Working Paper 320. (London, Overseas Development Institute, 2010), p. 15.

³³ Assessments of CCTs where the transfers were provided to women have shown very limited impact on power relations within the family (M. Molyneux, "Mothers at the Service of the New Poverty Agenda: Progres/Oportunidades, Mexico's Conditional Transfer Programme", *Social Politics and Administration*, vol. 40, No. 4 (2006), pp. 429-40). This result is consistent with studies that document the widespread character of the appropriation of women's wages by men.

³⁴ J. Jenson, "Lost in Translation: The Social Investment Perspective and Gender Equality", *Social Politics*, vol. 16, No. 4 (2009), pp. 446-483.

wages are low (or payment is made in the form of food items), only those in genuine need, who have run out of other options, may seek to enter these programmes, which are therefore self-targeting. Public works programmes may serve to create physical infrastructure (such as irrigation schemes, wells or rural roads) or to deliver environmental services (for instance hillside terracing or other landscape arrangements to facilitate the capture of rain water or the planting of trees) that contribute to long-term development aims.

27. Many public works schemes set aside a quota for women. India's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), introduced in 2005 and which benefited 52.5 million households in 2009-2010, provides for one third of the employment to be allocated to women.³⁵ The Rural Maintenance Programme in Bangladesh goes even further; it is an all-women programme, successfully employing over 50,000 rural women to maintain 60,000 miles of earthen roads.³⁶ While access to employment in such programmes can favour the empowerment of women, paying greater attention to the gender impacts could significantly increase their benefits to women:

(a) Women may choose not to participate in such programmes because of the heavy demands it would impose on them and the difficulties they may have in reconciling the work with their responsibilities in the "care" economy. A system of quotas may be ineffective to address this. The difficulties women may face to participate in public works programmes should therefore be taken into account: their responsibilities in the "care" economy should be recognized and accommodation measures should be adopted. Furthermore, work schedules should take into account the specific time constraints faced by women, and institutionalized child care should be implemented to attract more women. Where child care at the work site is under the responsibility of women who are labour-constrained, because of age or disability, this can further increase the opportunities the programme offers to women. Thus, the MGNREGA includes a provision that "in the event that there are at least five children under the age of six at the worksite, one of the female workers shall be deputed to look after them and paid the same wage as other NREGA workers." However, the implementation of this clause remains highly uneven as most women joining the programme are discouraged from bringing their children to work, and a social audit of the implementation of MGNREGA revealed that 70 per cent of the women interviewed had no access to child-care facilities on the worksite, while 65 per cent were not aware of this provision in the Act.³⁷

(b) Similar self-exclusion may occur where the work proposed under the public works programmes is considered too demanding physically (more suitable for men) or violates certain cultural norms as to which tasks are suitable for women. The challenge in this case would be to ensure that the division of tasks on the programme takes into account the specific constraints faced by women, without reinforcing gender stereotypes. This may be done by adopting a phased approach. During a first phase, some work may be designated as "light" or "moderate" with priority for women, and some work as "heavy" and assigned to men; and certain tasks that are traditionally performed by women could be included in public works programmes, for instance preparing food in community kitchens or maintaining community vegetable gardens. At the same time, it should be ensured that

³⁵ In fact, the participation rate of women exceeded that minimum every year, reaching 48 per cent in 2009-2010 at national level (ILO-UNDP, "Sharing Innovative Experiences. Successful Social Protection Floor Experiences", (Global South-South Development Academy, 2011), p. 276).

³⁶ S. Devereux and C. Solomon, "Employment creation programmes: The international experience. Issues in Employment and Poverty", Discussion Paper 24 (Geneva, ILO, 2006), p. 31.

³⁷ S. Narayanan, "Employment guarantee, women's work and childcare", *Economic Political Weekly*, vol. 43, No. 9 (2008), pp. 10-12.

women are paid the same wages as men. During a second phase, in order to reduce the risk that such an approach might reinforce gender stereotypes, women could gradually be encouraged to learn how to perform tasks traditionally assigned to men, so that in time "role-shifting" will occur.³⁸

(c) The assets created by the programme could serve to ease the situation of rural women in the areas concerned, consistent with the aim of reducing the burden that they shoulder.³⁹ For instance, digging boreholes or planting trees can reduce the time women spend fetching water or fuelwood in the community where such work is performed. As illustrated by Ethiopia's cash-for-work Productive Safety Net Programme, public works programmes could serve to support agricultural work on the private land of female-headed households which generally suffer from chronic labour shortage. Public works could serve to improve physical infrastructure in rural areas and establish food-processing technologies, in order to reduce the drudgery of cooking and laundry.⁴⁰ Public works programmes also could include health extension work, adult literacy or HIV/AIDS prevention, all of which could be immediately attractive for women.

(d) Women should be involved in the design and evaluation of public works programmes. This could ensure that the right balance is struck between the need for a gender-sensitive approach and the risk of reinforcement of gender stereotyping. It could also help determine the modes of payment, in particular whether payment should be in the form of food or cash. While cash payments leave the beneficiaries greater choice, it may also facilitate the appropriation by men of women's wages, especially if the payment is not deposited electronically into a bank account in the woman's name. Also, cash payment may not be the preferred solution if purchasing food is time-consuming or if markets are unreliable due, for instance, to the lack of stability of supply of certain staple foods⁴¹ or the high volatility of prices in the market. Indeed, women may express a preference for payment in the form of food rations or payment on a daily basis, rather than on a monthly basis, especially if their priority concern is the daily subsistence of their families. Such issues can only be addressed through effective participation of women in the shaping of programmes intended to benefit them. Participation is thus both an end in itself – a source of empowerment – and a means – as it can significantly increase the effectiveness of the programmes and their ability to make a difference to women.

C. Asset transfer schemes

28. Under asset transfer schemes, productive assets, such as small livestock, are provided to poor households to support their income generation activities. Bangladesh's Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction - Targeting the Ultra Poor (CFPR) programme, launched in 2002 by the non-governmental organization Building Resources Across Communities (BRAC), demonstrates the benefits of adopting a gender-sensitive approach. For instance, it takes into account the fact that female-headed households are often more labour-constrained (both due to "care" responsibilities of women and the lower ratio of income earners to dependents in those households) and provides assets, such as

³⁸ S. Devereux and C. Solomon, "Employment creation programmes"(see footnote 36), p. 40.

³⁹ R. Antonopoulos, "The right to a job, the right types of projects: Employment guarantee policies from a gender perspective", Working Paper 516. (New York, The Levy Economics Institute of Bard College, 2007).

⁴⁰ FAO-IFAD-ILO, *Gender dimensions of agricultural and rural employment: Differentiated pathways out of poverty* (Rome, 2010), p. 35.

⁴¹ A. K. Dejardin, "Public Works Programmes: A Strategy for Poverty Alleviation: The Gender Dimension", *Issues in Development, Discussion Paper 10* (Geneva, ILO, 1996), p. 14.

poultry, which require less labour to maintain and become a source of income.⁴² BRAC also seeks to strengthen the beneficiary's capacity to use the assets productively, and encourages the political empowerment of the poor. The programme provides for the establishment of seven-member Village Poverty Reduction Committees, comprising representatives of BRAC, beneficiaries of CFPR, as well as respected individuals drawn from the landed and wealthy elites of the local community. Instead of aiming to reduce the power of the local elites as part of the priorities of poverty-reduction interventions, the programme seeks the active involvement of local notables in order to enlist their support.

IV. Women's access to productive resources

29. Due to prevalent societal norms and gender roles, their higher average levels of education, and the fact that they are less constrained, men are often better placed to seize opportunities arising from employment creation in the industry and services sectors. The result is that, with some exceptions (e.g. women migration for household work), men tend to migrate first from rural areas, for longer periods and to further destinations. Women stay behind in the village – especially relatively older women, beyond 35 years of age, who are poorly educated and less independent – to take care of the children and the elderly, and increasingly, also to tend the family plot of land. Data in this area are often imprecise and difficult to interpret, partly because of the lack of gender-disaggregated data, as much of women's contribution to "subsistence" agriculture goes unreported in official statistics, and because the share of women's employment in agriculture varies from crop to crop and from activity to activity – ploughing, for instance, remains predominantly a task performed by men. Nonetheless, overall, this feminization of agriculture is well documented.⁴³

30. Concerns have been expressed about the impact that the feminization of agriculture may have on local food security, given the obstacles women face which negatively affect their productivity. Indeed, women often have little legal protection or rights to property ownership, and they face cultural and social norms that hinder their ability to improve productivity. How can these challenges be met? In the longer term, improving education for women and expanding opportunities for them in off-farm employment are key. But for the large number of women who depend on agriculture, including, increasingly, urban and peri-urban agriculture (see A/HRC/19/59, para. 44), it is equally important – and urgent – to improve women's opportunities to thrive as producers. Gender-sensitive agricultural policies are required,⁴⁴ consistent with guideline 8.6 of the Right to Food Guidelines concerning women's full and equal participation in the economy and the right of women to inherit and possess land and other property, and access to productive resources, including credit, land, water and appropriate technologies.

31. *Access to land* is key in this regard. In an earlier report (A/65/281), the Special Rapporteur discussed the vital role of access to land for small-scale agricultural producers, and the importance of addressing the discrimination women face in that regard. The right of women to have equal access to land is explicitly addressed by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and in numerous Human

⁴² R. Holmes and N. Jones, "Rethinking social protection using a gender lens" (see footnote 32), p. 16; I. Matin et al., "Crafting a Graduation Pathway for the Ultra Poor: Lessons and Evidence from a BRAC Programme", Working Paper No. 109 (Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2008).

⁴³ For a recent cross-country comparison, see SOFA 2010 (see footnote 10), p. 9; For an update on the phenomenon in China, see A. de Brauw, et al., "The Feminization of Agriculture with Chinese Characteristics", Discussion Paper 01189 (Washington, D.C., IFPRI, 2012).

⁴⁴ World Bank, "Agriculture for Development: The Gender Dimensions", Agriculture for Development Policy Brief, (Washington, D.C., 2007).

Rights Council and General Assembly resolutions on the right to food. At the 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, Heads of State and Government also committed to promoting and protecting women's equal access to property and to land, as well as to productive resources.⁴⁵ Indeed, land is more than an economic asset that women should be allowed to use productively. It is also a means of empowerment, as the greater economic independence that results from land ownership enhances the woman's role in decision-making and allows her to garner more social, family and community support.

32. Women face multiple forms of discrimination in accessing land. As regards land that is inherited, laws in many countries still discriminate against women, and even when the discriminatory elements are removed, the laws are often circumvented under the pressure of social and cultural norms. For instance, where a sister could inherit land on an equal basis with her brothers, she may accept a lump-sum payment in lieu of her portion of the land in order to maintain good relations with her brothers.⁴⁶ As regards land that is acquired during marriage, in a number of regions, particularly in South Asia, a separation of property regime is applied, according to which assets brought into the marriage or acquired during marriage remain the individual property of the spouse who acquired said assets from his or her personal funds. But this leads to deeply inequitable outcomes, as it does not recognize the important non-monetary contribution that women make to the household by looking after the house, child-rearing, caring for the elderly, or various other chores.⁴⁷

33. Women also face discrimination in accessing *extension services*.⁴⁸ First, women are underrepresented among extension services agents. Yet, in some contexts, social or cultural rules may prohibit contacts between a woman farmer and a male agricultural agent, especially when the woman is single, widowed or abandoned. Moreover, male agents may have less understanding for the specific constraints faced by women. Second, extension services tend to presume that any knowledge transmitted to the men will automatically trickle down to the women and so that they benefit equally, and meetings may be organized without taking into account the specific time and mobility constraints of women. This reinforces the pre-existing imbalances in decision-making within the household and neglects the fact that the needs of women may be different from those of men.

34. The third area is *finance*. Microcredit schemes often target rural women specifically, who, even more than men, face obstacles in accessing credit. However, far more could be done. First, improved access to loans for rural women does not necessarily imply that women will control the use of the loans. Some microfinance programmes directed at women have been assessed to be successful in increasing the participation of women in decision-making within the household, particularly as regards family planning and the children's education, and other members of the household have sometimes assumed a greater share of the housework since women who benefit from a microcredit programme tend to spend more time on their businesses and contribute more to the household income. The Small Farmers Development Program (SFDP) launched by the Indonesian government

⁴⁵ General Assembly resolution 65/1, para. 72 (k) and (l).

⁴⁶ N. Ramachandran, "Women and food security in South Asia: Current issues and emerging concerns", UNU/World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER), 2006/131 (2006).

⁴⁷ See for instance Indian Institute of Management, *The Gender Asset and Wealth Gaps: Evidence from Ecuador, Ghana and Karnataka, India* (Bangalore, 2011).

⁴⁸ World Bank and IFPRI, *Gender and governance in rural services: Insights from India, Ghana, and Ethiopia* (Washington, D.C., 2010).

in the early 1990s is one example.⁴⁹ But, overall evidence is mixed. Because the creditworthiness of women (as measured by loan repayment rates) is higher than that of men, women in practice may be used as convenient "middlemen" by the lending institutions' field workers and by the male members of households. This runs the risk of creating increased tensions within the household when the husband or other male relative does not give the woman the money to allow her to repay the loan on time or when the woman cannot access the loans she has obtained.⁵⁰ Women benefiting from microcredit in rural Bangladesh, for instance through the Grameen Bank, only seldom use the loans to run their own businesses. Instead of becoming entrepreneurs themselves, they often use the loans to support the capital of existing businesses that are usually managed by male members in the household or to support their husbands in launching micro-enterprises.⁵¹ Similar results were found in Andhra Pradesh, India.⁵²

35. Second, there is an inherent tension between the hope that microfinance programmes can function as a financially self-sustaining means of addressing rural poverty, and the objective of supporting the poorest women and single women with a low capacity to improve their productivity levels – because they may be poorly qualified or illiterate, or cannot move beyond home-based activities due to their household responsibilities. The result is that while microfinance programmes increasingly target rural women, they mainly benefit the women who already have most assets or who have male relatives to work with them, and often do not reach the poorest, who operate in a "mini-economy" of very small transactions, so small in fact that the transaction costs of dealing with them are too high even for microcredit institutions.⁵³

36. Finally, in order to make a stronger contribution to poverty alleviation and to women's empowerment, *agricultural research and development* could take into account the specific constraints faced by women and their preferences. For instance, women may prefer crop varieties that can be more easily prepared for the family or that are easier to cultivate, for instance, those that are less threatened by weeds or can be easily husked. Because of the obstacles women face in accessing credit, they may prefer to grow crops following agro-ecological, low-external-input techniques, which also avoid the need to transport bags of fertilizers, which could be difficult in the absence of adequate means of transportation.⁵⁴ Rural women possess traditional farming knowledge and skills that, in many cases, represent a huge, largely untapped potential.

⁴⁹ R.D.M. Panjaitan-Drioadisuryo and K. Cloud, "Gender, Self-Employment, and Microcredit Programs: An Indonesian Case Study", *The Quarterly Review of Economics and Finance*, vol. 39, No. 5 (1999), pp. 769-79.

⁵⁰ A.M. Goetz and R. Sen Gupta, "Who Takes Credit? Gender, Power, and Control Over Loan Use in Rural Credit Programs in Bangladesh", *World Development*, vol. 24, No. 1 (1996), pp. 45-63; A. Rahman, "Micro-credit initiatives for equitable and sustainable development: who pays?", *World Development*, vol. 27, No. 1 (1999), pp. 67-82; Sujata Balasubramanian, "Why Micro-Credit May Leave Women Worse Off: Non-Cooperative Bargaining and the Marriage Game in South Asia", *Journal of Development Studies* (2012), pp. 1-15 (DOI:10.1080/00220388.2012.709618).

⁵¹ M.J.A. Chowdhury, "Microcredit, micro-enterprises, and self-employment of women: experience from the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh", FAO-IFAD-ILO Workshop on Gaps, trends and current research in gender dimensions of agricultural and rural employment, Rome, 31 March-2 April 2009.

⁵² S. Garikipati, "Microcredit and women's empowerment: understanding the 'impact paradox' with particular reference to South India", in S. Chant, ed., *The International Handbook of Gender and Poverty: Concepts, Research, Policy* (Cheltenham, Northampton, Edward Elgar, 2010), pp. 599-605.

⁵³ R. Sabates-Wheeler and N. Kabeer, "Gender equality and the extension of social protection", ESS Paper No. 16 (Geneva, ILO, 2003), p. 40.

⁵⁴ R. Meinzen-Dick et al., *Engendering Agricultural Research, Development and Extension* (Washington, D.C., IFPRI, 2011).

37. The recognition that women may have different priorities to those of men leads to fundamental questions about the type of support they should be provided. For instance, titling schemes as a means to increase security of tenure may be considered with scepticism if the schemes are captured by men or elites or if it implies encouraging the development of a market for land rights, when land is more than an economic asset for many rural households, particularly women who depend on land for a non-cash type of production to feed their families. Similarly, if microcredit schemes crowd out other forms of support provided to small-scale food producers, it may result in forcing beneficiaries, women in particular, to move towards production for the market, rather than for self-consumption, something which may not correspond to the priorities of women in specific contexts. Developing agricultural research in ways that are more responsive to women's needs may result in greater attention being paid to the preservation of the resource base on which they rely, not only for agricultural production but also for domestic needs (medicinal plants, fuelwood, wild fruit). It may also result in more attention being paid to the more nutritious food crops, rather than to only staple crops, particularly cereals; and in choices in agricultural research that focus more on the post-harvesting phase – not simply on the prospects of selling the produce in high-value markets, but also on the possibility of preserving food from losses, the nutritional value of the food that is produced for consumption within the household, or the impact a particular variety may have on the time constraints of women.

38. Involving women in the design, implementation and assessment of all these policies, could therefore have deeply transformative effects on how we conceive of the role of small-scale farming itself. This is why participation matters: it is to ensure that women have real choices. The strengthening of women's cooperatives or encouraging group farming by women's collectives are also important for that reason. Not only should women be able to overcome the obstacles that obstruct their ability to be as productive as men, they should also be able to redefine the priorities of the small-scale farming system, of which they are becoming the main actors.

V. A human rights response

39. A human rights-based strategy to address gender discrimination against women includes four complementary requirements. It must relieve women of the burdens of household chores; it must be empowering and challenge the existing division of roles; it must systematically aim at taking into account gender in existing food security strategies; and, as regards governance, it must be part of a multisectoral and multi-year effort, including independent monitoring of progress towards certain targets.

Relieving women of the burdens of the "care" economy

40. A first requirement is breaking the cycle of discrimination against women. This does not mean simply removing discriminatory provisions in the law, particularly as regards access to land or other productive resources, but it also requires that the structural causes of de facto discrimination be addressed. In particular, measures should be taken to relieve women of the burden imposed on them by the duties they assume in the "care" economy, and to improve their economic opportunities by better access to education and employment. Older women are particularly at risk of food insecurity as the cumulative effect of discrimination in accessing employment tends to leave older women with

disproportionately lower (or no) incomes and pensions in later life; yet older women are expected to take care of other, more dependent members of the household.⁵⁵

41. Certain investments can significantly reduce the burden that household chores impose on women. In rural areas, such measures include the provision of water services and afforestation projects to reduce the time spent fetching water and fuelwood. In both rural and urban areas, measures would include the establishment or strengthening of child-care services and care for the elderly or persons with illness/disability. By reducing the time poverty of women, their economic opportunities would expand, since it would be easier for them to seek employment outside the household; access incomes and increase their economic independence, which, in turn, would strengthen their bargaining position within the household. In order for such opportunities to be seized, access to education for girls and life-long training must be improved and societal perceptions of gender roles which discriminate against women must be changed. Improved education and employment prospects are mutually reinforcing, as the demand for education (investment in human capital) will increase in proportion to increase in the demand for a qualified female workforce.

Empowering women and subverting the gendered division of roles

42. A second requirement is achieving the right combination of measures that recognize the specific obstacles women face (particularly time poverty and restricted mobility resulting from their role in the "care" economy), and measures that seek to transform the existing gender division of roles by redistributing tasks both within the household and in other spheres. As long as we simply recognize the role of women in the "care" economy by accommodating their specific needs, the existing division of roles within the household and associated gender stereotypes will remain in place, and could even be reinforced. Redistributing roles and challenging the associated gender stereotypes require a transformative approach, whereby the support provided to women not only recognizes their specific needs, but seen provides the opportunity to question existing social and cultural norms.

43. Such transformative approach is clearly required under human rights law. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women affirms that "a change in the traditional role of men as well as the role of women in society and in the family is needed to achieve full equality between men and women" (preamble, 14th para). Accordingly, States Parties shall seek, inter alia, to "modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women", and to promote the "recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children" (art. 5 (a)). In reference to this provision, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has urged States to combat patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men within the family and society at large (women being considered as having the primary responsibility for child-rearing and domestic tasks, and men being considered the main breadwinners) and to reject the concept that assigns the role of "head of the household" to men.⁵⁶

44. The transformative approach implies that as policies seek to accommodate the specific needs of women, they should also seek to subvert traditional gendered divisions of roles. The two objectives are not necessarily easy to reconcile, but they should be

⁵⁵ See E/2012/51 and Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, general recommendation No. 27 (2010) on older women and protection of their human rights.

⁵⁶ See, for example, CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/4, paras. 21-22; CEDAW/C/USR/CO/7, paras. 20-21; CEDAW/C/MUS/CO/6-7, para. 18.

prioritized in the design and implementation of programmes and given careful, context-sensitive consideration. In public works programmes for instance, where a gender-blind approach may lead to the de facto exclusion of women, the specific contributions and needs of women should be acknowledged, such as access to nurseries or adapted schedules, in order to enable them to effectively benefit from the programmes.

45. For this reason also, interventions aimed at improving the situation of women should be empowering. Social protection programmes should define the beneficiaries as rights-holders who can make claims against the administrations in charge of delivery, and beneficiaries should be informed of their rights and access to claims mechanisms should be ensured. In addition to ensuring decentralized monitoring of the implementation of social programmes and providing a safeguard against corruption or discrimination, this will contribute to empowering beneficiaries, in particular women, who are generally treated as passive recipients of programmes that are intended to help them without including them as active participants.

46. Social audits can also be an effective means of empowering women within the local communities, if their views are sought expressly and if the community audit exercise is only considered valid if women are adequately represented. Social audits can take different forms: a public report to the village assembly by government officials on the use of funds allocated to certain programmes and on the allocations to the beneficiaries (whether they are individuals employed in cash-for-work schemes or schools supported in school-feeding schemes); publication of revenues and disbursements on the Internet, which would enable non-governmental organizations to track instances of misuse or diversion of funds; citizens' report cards, as in India or the Philippines; community score cards, as in Kenya and the Gambia; or budgetary audits as those conducted by Javanese farmers in Indonesia.⁵⁷

Mainstreaming gender sensitivity

47. In previous reports, the Special Rapporteur emphasized the added value of a gender impact analysis of trade and investment agreements and contract farming schemes (A/HRC/19/59/Add.5, principle 5, and A/66/262, para. 21). All public policies that address food security – whether social programmes, agricultural policies or rural development policies – should ensure that greater attention is paid to women. This should not be simply in order to reach them more effectively, but also to ensure that their views are systematically sought in the design, implementation and evaluation of programmes. One way in which this could be encouraged is by incentivizing public administrations to set targets related to gender equality, and rewarding, through a system of premiums, public officials who reach the targets. Chile's Program for Improved Public Management (PIPM) provides an example:⁵⁸ since 2002, almost every ministry is required to establish specific goals incorporating the gender dimension into their public policies. The Women's Service assesses the efforts made and the tools used, and the Ministry of Finance establishes the corresponding monetary bonuses. In addition, the programme is complemented by the incorporation of gender advisors in each ministry, as well as a Women's Agenda and a long-term Plan for Equal Opportunities.

A multisectoral and rights-based strategy

48. A successful strategy for strengthening the rights of women in support of the realization of the right to food requires a whole-of-government approach, coordinated

⁵⁷ L. Peisakhin and P. Pinto, "Is transparency an effective anti-corruption strategy?", *Regulation & Governance*, vol. 4, No. 3 (2010), pp. 261–280.

⁵⁸ See <http://www.sernam.cl/pmg/index.php>.

across various ministries, including those responsible for health, education, employment, social affairs and agriculture. For instance, for the multiplier effects of school-feeding programmes to be maximized, coordinated action between departments responsible for agriculture, education and employment is required. Such a strategy should include targets, defined through a participatory process, and independent monitoring of their achievement within specified time frames. The outcomes to be achieved should be defined through indicators based on the normative components of the right to food, and disaggregated by ethnicity, age and gender in order to ensure that a gender-sensitive approach will be adopted in all sectors, and that multiple forms of discrimination, such as that experienced by older women and indigenous women, is tracked and addressed effectively. The systematic collection of gender-disaggregated data is key to this objective.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

49. **International human rights law requires States to guarantee gender equality and the empowerment of women. While essential to the women's right to food, this would also contribute to the realization of the right to food for other members of society. The advancement of women's rights translates into improved physical and mental development of children, whose ability to learn and to lead healthy and productive lives will gain; it translates into better health and nutritional outcomes for the household, as the decision-making power within the family is rebalanced in favour of women; and it results in higher productivity for women as small-scale food producers.**

50. **States' obligation to remove all discriminatory provisions in the law, and to combat discrimination that has its source in social and cultural norms, is an immediate obligation that must be complied with without delay. This should be combined with the use of temporary special measures to accelerate the achievement of gender equality, and with effective remedies for women who are victims of discrimination. In addition, as detailed in chapter V of this report, States should (a) make the investments required to relieve women of the burden of the household chores they currently shoulder; (b) recognize the need to accommodate the specific time and mobility constraints on women as a result of their role in the "care" economy, while at the same time redistributing the gender roles by a transformative approach to employment and social protection; (c) mainstream concern for gender in all laws, policies and programmes, where appropriate, by developing incentives that reward public administrations which make progress in setting and reaching targets in this regard; (d) adopt multisector and multi-year strategies that move towards full equality for women, under the supervision of an independent body to monitor progress, relying on gender-disaggregated data in all areas relating to the achievement of food security.**
