

Cultivating Change: Women Reclaiming and Transforming Food Systems Webinar Series | International Year of the Woman Farmer



Women farmers are essential to global and local food security, sustainable agriculture and climate resilience. Across the world, rural women play a central role in producing food, managing natural resources and sustaining rural livelihoods. Yet their roles often remain under-recognised, while structural inequalities continue to limit their access to land, water, seeds, finance, services, education and decision-making. These challenges are further intensified by growing polycrisis dynamics alongside rising debt burdens and constrained access to fertilizers and other essential resources, all of which disproportionately affect women farmers and further limit their resilience and economic opportunities.

In the context of the International Year of the Woman Farmer, this three-part international webinar series

brings together stake holders, development practitioners, civil society organisations and researchers to highlight the realities of women farmers and discuss solutions for more inclusive and gender-responsive food systems. The series places a particular focus on gender-transformative approaches that address power relations and social norms.

The series is jointly organised by GIZ FemHub, UN Women National Committee Germany and Rural Women’s Assembly with each partner bringing distinct expertise — from global advocacy and grassroots organising to practical tools and implementation experience. Together, the partners aim to strengthen dialogue, share evidence and experiences, and identify practical pathways to advance gender equality in agriculture and food systems worldwide.

The webinar series explores the role of women farmers in food systems from different perspectives — from lived realities and structural barriers to concrete solutions and policy approaches. Each session includes keynote inputs, moderated discussions and interactive audience engagement.

Webinar 1 | 08 June 2026, 2:00 – 3:30 pm CET Women Farmers and Food Security: Visibility, Roles and Realities

Across Asia and the Pacific, women are at the heart of food systems. They cultivate crops, manage fisheries and forests, safeguard seeds and biodiversity, and ensure household and community nutrition. In many countries in the region, women drive agricultural labour—yet they continue to face systemic barriers that limit their productivity, agency, and resilience.

These barriers include unequal access to land and water and inheritance rights, limited control over productive resources such as credit, inputs and technology, underrepresentation in agricultural decision-making bodies, and disproportionate unpaid care and domestic work. Climate change, environmental degradation, and economic shocks further exacerbate these inequalities, placing women farmers at heightened risk while simultaneously relying on their knowledge and adaptive capacities.

When UN Women developed the programme *EmPower: Women for Climate-Resilient Societies*, gender remained limited in climate, energy and disaster risk reduction policies, and where women were mentioned, they were often framed as vulnerable groups rather than as rights holders, leaders, or knowledge holders. Women's organizations, indigenous women, rural women, and other at-risk groups often had limited space to shape climate decisions, despite already managing climate impacts and solutions in their communities. *EmPower* was created to respond to this implementation challenge. It helps turn global gender and climate commitments into practical country and regional action. It connects policy, data, women's leadership, clean and renewable energy, and finance, addressing the gap between climate ambition and the institutions, markets, evidence, and community leadership needed to deliver it.

UN Women's regional priorities with regards to women farmers are women's economic empowerment, climate resilience, transformative approaches to gender equality in rural development and food systems. Women are not only responding to challenges but actively reshaping food systems. What can we learn from women farmers' lived experiences, knowledge and leadership - and how can we support their efforts?

Agenda

2:00 – 2:10 pm CET

Welcome and opening remarks

- **Christina Arkenberg**, moderator, Board Member UN Women Germany

2:10 – 2:25 pm CET

Keynote input

- **Maria Holtsberg**, Deputy Regional Director UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

2:25 – 3:25 pm CET

Moderated panel discussion

- **Maria Holtsberg**, Deputy Regional Director, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
- **Sita Aripurnami**, Executive Director, Women Research Institute – EmPower
- Audience participation

3:25 – 3:30 pm CET

Key takeaways and closing

- **Christina Arkenberg**, moderator, Board Member UN Women Germany