



# Actions for Implementing Women's Land Right



## Rural women's land and resource rights program (WRRP) - An Alternative Model.

- a) A new group approach to state support for land to landless women needs the States to commit a budget for livelihood options with greater participation of women. Where group rights can not be created women should be given individual titles. Further the training and credit needs of the economic activity should be met with
- support from the government
- b) Establish greater control over common property systems by women in the village local government for user rights and development rights on forestland, water bodies and wasteland. Encourage programs to initiate activity for women to collectively grow food for local

consumption. This will provide women with food and livelihood security. Under poverty alleviation programs the poor, landless women need to be given land grants for a period of twenty years for economic activity to be managed by a designated woman's group.

- c) Demarcate peoples forest councils by leasing forest land to mixed groups of men and women under the management of the women in the village council for fifty years on the basis of

an agreed forest development and peoples survival plan.

- d) State governments should allocate 30% of their rural development budget for the WRRP.

Women's control over productive natural resources will increase their participation in the governance systems. To prevent violence, linked to political empowerment, protection by the state and women's group must be ensured.



## Ask for village level mechanisms to link women's resource rights to women's security and empowerment

Women's resource rights program (WRRP) should be budgeted for in every village of a nutrition deficit and LDC country. This program should have provisions for several group land grants on lease to the landless in the village and a budget to establish a Woman Resource Rights Centre (WRRC).

The WRRC will plan different women's empowerment

programs based on the user rights and development rights on forestland, water bodies and waste land near the village. The building of the WRRC can be used for storing farm implements or farm products, providing a crèche for the children and providing space for activities to prevent trafficking and violence against women. The central government support for salary of a WRRP staff can

assist in documenting the number of women and girls who belong to the village, migrate for work and marriage and return home. This way the village register could track and investigate if girls and women are being trafficked out. The district government could provide a telephone to connect the centre to authorities and other women's and human rights groups for protection against violence. For the WRRP to be a part of the local self-government, it should be merged within the micro planning process of the village local government to make women economically empowered while providing them with protection from exploitation and violence.

The core task of the WRRP is to ensure the **registration of women's names in land records** by encouraging equal Inheritance rights for daughters and sons and securing property rights of widows and single women at the village level and ward level. The social milieu for this will be created if the women's collective grants and individual enterprises are made economically viable through technical and financial support from the government at the district and the central level.

Initiatives to provide resource rights to women have been successfully implemented in some parts of India, Nepal, Brazil, Tunisia, Chile, and Nicaragua. These cases indicate that it is important for the government to set up a formal institutional mechanism to contribute to fulfill commitments made under Art 14,15 and 16 of CEDAW and commitments to the Beijing conference, thereby, acknowledging women's resource rights.

It is imperative to initiate programmatic interventions while advocating for policy changes and legal amendments. A government scheme like this would provide some protection to poor women in accessing as much as controlling the land, water, forest and other productive resources until their rights are well recognised and respected in society.

To develop women's resource rights including their right to land and adequate housing as a central agenda for Beijing +10 implementation, the governments should provide land for women's use, apart from the family land as social customs and practices prevent women from gaining household rights to land.





# What can individuals do to promote women's land and resource rights

*'The change will come when you strive to change your self...'*

- song from the women's movement in South Asia

## At the local level

- ◆ Confront the issue of women's land rights in your own context.
- ◆ Assess the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of women's organisation to take on the land rights agenda at the village level.
- ◆ Identify land and petition for gaining access and control over it.
- ◆ Ask the local authorities to fulfil your right to livelihood and food security by allotting land to a village women's group.
- ◆ Create awareness among men and women on issues of land literacy, land rights and organic farming
- ◆ Ask the land poor in your area to work on their plan to gain and sustain ownership or usufruct rights over land/fishponds/forest.
- ◆ Develop support for women's land rights by setting up WRRC to prevent violence against women and trafficking in your village through the village local government's involvement.
- ◆ Develop district and state level campaigns on women's housing and land rights, food sovereignty and livelihood security.

## At the national level and international level

- ◆ As social customs and practices prevent women from gaining household rights to land, ask the government to provide land for women's use, apart from the family land.
- ◆ Develop women's land rights as a central agenda for implementation in national and state plans by suggesting changes in policy, law and programs.
- ◆ Lobby for women's land rights at international forums to strengthen national commitment to implement BPFA and MDG.
- ◆ Suggest to your government ways to fulfill its existing commitment made during Beijing conference, the Istanbul conference on the Habitat Agenda and the Rome summit on Right to food.



These suggestions have emerged from the work of the Consult on Woman Land and Resource Rights February 2005