



Food and Agriculture
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PRESS RELEASE

ICARDA, FAO join forces to promote decent work and gender equality in Egypt

Beirut, 11 April 2017 – The stakeholder validation workshop on rural women and decent employment in Egypt, organized jointly by the [International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas \(ICARDA\)](#) and the [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations \(FAO\)](#), opened on 10 April in Cairo, Egypt. The two-day-event is part of ICARDA and FAO’s joint efforts to address rural gender inequalities and accelerate women’s empowerment in rural communities across the Middle East and North Africa region, one of the most gender-segregated regions in the world in terms of employment and work opportunities.

The workshop brought together more than 40 participants representing various governmental agencies, agricultural institutions, policy makers, media and international organizations present in Egypt.

Dr. Hisham Alam, welcomed the participants speaking on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation Dr. Abdel Moneim El-Banna and highlighted the importance of the projects focusing on the rural women development in Egypt. “These projects empower women and offer opportunities for the youth,” he said.

“Women are vital to reducing rural poverty and improving food security and nutrition in rural areas,” said Mr. Hussein Gadain, FAO Representative in Egypt. “However, their access to services – including education, training, finance and agricultural extension – is restricted due to disempowering social norms, as well as gender-blind planning and service delivery modalities.”

“The purpose of this workshop is to create a forum for national stakeholders to discuss opportunities and formulate recommendations for enhancing rural women’s access to decent jobs,” said Ms. Dina Najjar, Social and Gender Specialist, ICARDA, speaking at the opening ceremony of the workshop.

The empirical study conducted jointly by ICARDA and FAO on women’s work and empowerment in rural Egypt has produced fresh evidence on the gender disparities in rural employment and the needs for creating more and better jobs for rural women.

With a population of almost 95 million, Egypt is the third most populous country in Africa, after Nigeria and Ethiopia. According to the World Bank, about 57% of the population in Egypt live in rural areas. Agriculture remains the main source of livelihoods in rural Egypt. It employs 30% of the population including 45% women. Despite this significant number, rural women have limited access to productive

resources and services, face widespread discrimination and exploitation in rural labour markets, and are often excluded from decision-making within their households and communities.

“Rural women play a crucial role in food security, income generation and agricultural production in Egypt, but their contributions remain largely invisible in official statistics and their rights as workers are often ignored,” said Mr. Libor Stloukal, Policy Officer, FAO. “Enhancing women’s access to decent employment and unleashing their potential in agriculture can generate major gains in terms of food security, poverty reduction and economic growth.”

“ICARDA combines expertise with partners to ensure that rural women can access secure employment and decent working conditions, which are key ingredients for reducing poverty and achieving sustainable livelihoods,” said Mr. Aly Abousabaa, ICARDA’s Director General.

The workshop is expected to generate policy recommendations for improving the availability and accessibility of decent jobs for women in rural Egypt, thereby accelerating progress towards women’s economic and social empowerment.

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Please, find photos from the workshop [here](#).

#decentwork4Eg

About ICARDA

The International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) is a global agricultural research organization working with countries in the world’s dry and marginal areas to deliver sustainable systems solutions that increase productivity, improve rural nutrition, and strengthen national food security. ICARDA is a member of CGIAR, a group of 15 international agricultural research centers that produce public goods science. www.icarda.org

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