

Press Release

Autonomy Through Agroecology, UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS),
United Nations, New York, 23 September 2021.

Women Farmers' Rights And Autonomy Critical For Global Food Security, says Swiss Study

Berne | New York, 21 September 2021 - The report "Autonomy Through Agroecology" with case studies of six women farmers from the global South and Switzerland has been released today. It is addressed to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and focuses on the rural women and their efforts to achieve greater autonomy within a agroecological framework. The report, including a list of policy recommendations can be accessed on the website of the Swiss organization.

Women are an essential factor of global food systems.¹ But their present situation is marked by a lack of autonomy, lack of recognition, lack of social protection, insufficient education, lack of access to land ownership, isolation and even violence.

The common thread running through the women's biographies, is their drive to increase their autonomy, the report says. They seek self-determination as individuals and as farmers. The motive drives all six women to keep on innovating in order to have the productive means in their own hands to control their successes and failures.

Sonja Tschirren, co-author and SWISSAID expert for agroecology, appeals to world leaders at the summit: «The UN must ensure that all stakeholders protect, respect and fulfill the human rights of peasants and family farmers, especially the rights of women and girls, and that they build on these right holders' own assessment of what needs to be done.»

Amina from Tanzania, a protagonist of the study, reports that agroecological management of her farm enables her to produce food and provide ecosystem services all year round. New sources of income are opening up for her as a result. In her case, it is chicken farming that helps generate quick returns. Gaining control over their production is a prerequisite for women to successfully realize the right to food. Or, as Amina puts it:

« After getting education and agroecologica know-how, women went on to do farming through-out the year. Agriculture is now seen as a business that allows for a better life; it is a new mindset. »

The report's recommendations were developed in response to the ideas for change that were formulated by the women to the attention of the UN Food Systems Summit.

¹ In Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, more than 80 percent of the food consumed is produced on smallholder farms. Women farmers are the main actors. In sub-Saharan Africa, women produce up to 80 percent of the food consumed in rural areas, including rice, wheat and maize. <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/fr/magazine/%C3%A9dition-sp%C3%A9ciale-agriculture-2014/!%E2%80%99agriculture-une-affaire-de-femmes>

See here for the **summary** and for **the full report**
<https://www.swissaid.ch/en/articles/listen-up/>

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