



Recommendations and proposals from the National federation of farmers for support of women from rural areas in a conditions of health-economic crises in Republic of North Macedonia caused by Coronavirus

The National federation of farmers, which is a socio-economic partner of the Ministry of agriculture, forestry and water economy (MAFWE), through its sector for lobbying and information monitors the situation in agriculture, an extremely important sector for ensuring a stable economy, especially in the area of providing food in this difficult situation in our country caused by the Corona Virus, and shares the field information, defined recommendations and requests to the MAFWE and the Government of RNM.

So far, two field analyzes have been prepared for the impact of the health and economic crisis caused by the Corona Virus on Agriculture and Rural Areas, where the second field analysis covers problems and challenges that women from rural areas are facing with, proposals and recommendations, and they were sent to MAFWE and the Government of RNM. In order to create common recommendations and commitments, the part of the analysis that refers to women from rural areas we share with the coordination group for gender equality in MAFWE supported by UN Women. Field analyzes were conducted on the basis of interviews, with 500 members of the Federation, of which 175 were women from rural areas and 100 young farmers, as well as statistics obtained from relevant institutions and research.

What is noted from the field, is that the negative effects of the health-economic crisis in the country caused by the Corona Virus affect women in rural areas, because their workload now has increased both at home and in the field, and their work is still not valued. What we want to emphasize once again, is that women in rural areas face a number of challenges, including social exclusion, unemployment, gender discrimination, unequal distribution of income and resources, dominance of traditional norms, and deprivation of agricultural land and property, deprivation of the right to paid parental leave, limited access and supply of education, information, health care, public and social services. Such conditions force rural women to live in greater poverty and encourage migration. About 64% of rural women are not active in the labor market due to their engagement in the household and childcare, and 47% of unemployed rural women do unpaid work on family farms. According to the source of family income, households which are living from agricultural income are second in poverty (57.4%) - the highest is among families with social assistance income (90.6%). 58% of all rural women have no personal income, twice as much as men in rural areas.¹

¹ Multidimensional poverty analysis in RNM

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Women work an average of 11.06 hours a day (41.7% of the total workload falls on unpaid work). Men work an average of 9.68 hours a day - mostly paid work.² Now their work has increased. 85% of women who are members of the NFF (175 women from rural areas are members of the NFF) said in an interview that their work has increased both at home and in the field, as agriculture lacks seasonal workers, and alone with their husbands and the closest family perform the activities in the field, while at home the full obligation is still on their back. Increased homework is also a problem for single parents, people with a deceased partner, who care for children and the elderly, and families with people with disabilities (here again care is completely transferred to the woman).

Rural areas are facing underdeveloped infrastructure and a limited supply of public services. These factors, complemented by traditional values that are predominant in the rural population, put rural women in a difficult and extremely disadvantageous position by restricting their movement, access to information, and accessible development opportunities.

During this period of health-economic crisis caused by the Corona Virus, a special problem is the lack of ambulances and health workers, so the health examinations and purchase of medicines are done in the nearest cities by people working in the cities.

About 75% of the interviewed NFF members stated that they receive information on government measures and decisions related to the emergency situation and receive information from electronic media, social media, SMS messages through NFF information-communication software. We emphasize that this is data obtained by NFF members who are in constant communication with the NFF Executive Office during this period, where they receive complete and timely information on government decisions, which may not be the case with other farmers who are not our members.

Based on the above stipulated information, the National Federation of Farmers provides the following recommendations and suggestions in support of rural women, which are in line with CEDAW recommendations, development goals, Agenda 2030 and **the efforts of the Declaration to improve economic and social position of women in rural areas, which the National Federation of Farmers and the Rural Development Network signed with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in 2018.**³

- **All applicants who submitted complete documentation and fulfilled the requirements for measure 115 for an active female member of the agricultural**

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² Study "Measuring the level of empowerment of women in agriculture in RSM by applying an experimental economic method" implemented by the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food in Skopje and supported by UN Women, 2019)

³ Declaration on improving the social and economic position of rural women
<https://www.nff.org.mk/2018/10/15/%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%BA%D0%BB%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%80%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B0%D1%9A%D0%B5-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D1%81%D0%BE%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0/>

economy from the Program for financial support of rural development 2019 to receive a grant. By June 2020, the Agency for Financial Support of Agriculture and Rural Development should review all applications and approve those that meet the requirements. This will directly support rural women, who face many challenges during this period. We would like to point out that this request is in line with the recommendations of the CEDAW Report 2018 for RNM of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women of the United Nations, intended for women in rural areas. The report states: "Rural women should be provided with access to subsidies and rural development measures to the highest possible extent and prompt implementation". Our country is a member of the United Nations and should comply with and implement CEDAW recommendations. The Government to speed up the procedure to adopt the "Rulebook on conditions and hygiene for production and marketing for food of non-animal origin intended for direct supply, in geographical or economic constraints, as general and special requirements for the application of traditional methods of production, processing, and distribution of food with traditional characteristics ", to enable sales from the farm, so that farmers will be able to directly sell their agricultural products and processing, which is ⁴particularly important for women farmers.

- To give priority to the payment of subsidies, for registered farmers and women farmers, which are not paid for 2018, and are direct assistance of 20% to a holder of a family-agricultural holding, who is a registered performer of agricultural activity, according to The Law on Performing Agricultural Activity is either registered as an individual farmer/individual women farmer under the Law on Pension and Disability Insurance.
- Improving the availability of public information, as well as advisory information on production and sales that can be realized through the regional units of MAFWE, NEA, municipalities, and the non-governmental sector. This recommendation is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030.
- Creating government measures that will help reduce the outflow of seasonal workers abroad during seasonal intensive harvests. Improving the availability of public services (health, education, social services) for women in rural areas, which is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals

We believe that the above-stipulated measures should be implemented as soon as possible, while in the long run a comprehensive analysis should be made of the impact of the health-economic crisis, caused by the Corona Virus, on rural women and the creation of measures and policies that will be part of the new Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development with a special focus on improving the economic and social

⁴ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

- https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fMKD%2fCO%2f6&Lang=en

position of women in rural areas, as well as creating measures to recognize the unpaid labor of women for family care and finding solutions for rural women who have not achieved the right to a pension. This is the main commitment of the Declaration on Improving the Economic and Social Position of Women in Rural Areas, signed by the National Federation of Farmers and the Rural Development Network with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in 2018.