

Women as change-makers: Empowering stories of rural women and girls

Concept Note

Women and girls are central to the development of rural, national and global communities and economies. The achievement of Sustainable development goals and eradication of poverty is possible only through the inclusion and active participation of rural women and girls. But they face multiple challenges with the possibility of getting left behind on the path to development.

The Beijing Declaration and platform for Action puts ample stress on the vulnerabilities as well as the potential of the rural women and girls as development actors and not just the victims or beneficiaries of development. (www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/iwd/2012). The Geneva Declaration on Rural Women recognizes 'rural women as participants and direct beneficiaries of all development policies, programs and projects.' Despite the policies and legislations rural women and girls face multiple challenges of poverty, illiteracy, sexual abuse, domestic violence, human trafficking, caste based discrimination, migration, displacement and fewer opportunities. However we also have numerous stories that bear witness to women's resilience and creativity in the face of such challenging situations.

The official United Nations theme for International Women's Day 2012 was "Empower Rural Women — End Hunger and Poverty." There is a long way to go before we can bridge the gap between policies and practices and all women and girls can be said to enjoy the fundamental rights, freedom and dignity that are their birthright and that will guarantee their well-being

This side event will highlight the engagement of civil Society organizations with local communities and women's groups to facilitate their participation in the 2030 Transformative agenda for rural women and girls to claim their agency and build synergy.

The panelists will share the empowering stories followed by an interactive dialogue:

- Women Migrant Workers Rebuilding Lives as Urban Poor: Socio Economic Legal Perspective - *Julia George SSpS: Streevani, VIVAT International*
- Rural Women combatting multiple forms of violence: Legal challenges - *Cynthia Mathew, Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary*
- Youth Engagement in empowering the Indigenous Community: *Rowena Weng, International Presentation Association*
- War Widows: A Journey of Hope: *Rohan Dominic CMF, Fondazione Proclade Internazionale-Onus*
- Moderator: Celine Paramunda MMS, Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries

Co-Sponsors: International Presentation Association, Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary-Loreto Generalate, Fondazione Proclade Internazionale-Onus, Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, Sisters of Charity Federation, VIVAT International