



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



## **Balancing home and farm: Unlocking opportunities for women in rural areas of Europe and Central Asia**

**Side event – UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development 2025**

**Concept Note and Agenda**

**Co-organizers: FAO and UNFPA,**

**in collaboration with Associated Country Women of the World**

**Date: 1 April 2025**

**13:00 -14:30 CET**

**SDG 5 Gender Equality and SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth**

**Registration link:**

**<https://fao.zoom.us/meeting/register/Qv3Z5li8SyK8t5R7-a4zcg>**

Women in rural areas of Europe and Central Asia play a crucial yet largely invisible role in agriculture and rural development. While agriculture remains a major source of employment and food security, across their life course, women living in rural areas face barriers that limit their ability to generate income and access services and resources. Unpaid care responsibilities, compounded by patriarchal beliefs and

discriminatory social norms, constrain women's ability to access education, training, and economic opportunities, further limiting prospects for young girls. At the same time, restricted access to land, credit, and agricultural resources means that women's contributions to family farms remains informal and unpaid, reducing their opportunities to contribute to sustainability of rural economies and agrifood systems. As a result, the benefits from hard and tireless work remain limited for women in rural.

The double burden of farm and care work calls for innovative policies and programs that integrate care services and expand rural women's economic opportunities in the subregions of Europe and Central Asia. In some areas, rural populations are declining due to migration and aging, raising concerns about labour shortages in agriculture and access to essential services. In other regions, high birth rates in rural areas increase demand for improved healthcare, education, and social services and better employment opportunities, highlighting the need for expanding opportunities for young rural women.

Drawing on the latest data and evidence, this side event aims to foster a dialogue between policymakers, civil society, and academia by showcasing regional examples of successful policies, programs, and initiatives that enhance rural women's access to income-generating opportunities in agriculture, while promoting solutions for balancing work and caregiving responsibilities.

The side event's objectives are to:

- Identify region-specific interlinkages between rural women's economic empowerment in agriculture and their unpaid care responsibilities, highlighting how these factors limit their opportunities, participation, and leadership.
- Showcase effective policies, programs, and initiatives that expand rural women's access to income-generating opportunities while providing support mechanisms to balance their caregiving responsibilities.
- Facilitate a dialogue among policymakers and civil society to develop actionable strategies aimed at addressing structural inequalities, improving access to services, and advancing women's empowerment in the rural areas of the region.

## Agenda

**Moderator:** *Nick Newland--Ešner, Advocacy Director, Associated Country Women of the World*

Topic	Speakers
- Welcoming remarks	Klaus Beck, Deputy Regional Director, UNFPA Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia  Nabil Gangi, Deputy Regional Representative, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
Special speaker	Gulnora Rakhimova, Deputy Minister of Economy and finance of the Republic of Uzbekistan .

**Roundtable discussion**

Lela Bakradze, Society for Social Rights, Georgia: priorities and needs of rural women

Anna Sushko, Project Coordinator, Geopolitical Alliance of Women and Network of Ukrainian Teachers: women-led initiatives during the displacement, addressing care work and children's engagement

Mavzuna Yaminova, national gender expert, Tajikistan: experiences in addressing women's economic empowerment in rural Tajikistan

Iluta Lāce, director of the Association MARTA Centre, Latvia: Addressing violence against women and girls in rural areas. Promising practices (Latvia and Uzbekistan)

Ramona Duminicioiu, Ecoruralis, Romania: support for young rural women

**Wrap up and Closing Remarks**

Representative of FAO and UNFPA