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**RESILIENT WOMEN,  
SUSTAINABLE FUTURES:**  
ENHANCING CLIMATE RESILIENCE  
THROUGH WOMEN'S  
ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT  
IN THE CONTEXT OF  
RURAL REVITALIZATION

**UN Women China** Programme

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# The Issue

In China, a large proportion of rural women derive their livelihoods from climate-sensitive agriculture. Climate change and environmental degradation threatens women farmers' ability to generate income, and secure food and nutrition for their families and communities. As **women farmers make up over 70% of China's agricultural labor force**, the need to increase women's access to productive resources, assets, skills and leadership in climate-smart agriculture practices cannot be ignored.

In response, UN Women is launching a trilateral partnership with International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) and Hu'nan Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (DARA) to increase climate-resilient agriculture productivity and rural economic vitality in **10 counties** in the province through women's empowerment. Over the next 5 years (2021-2026), the project will mobilize **US\$173.27 million** in funding to **directly benefit over 320,000 individuals in total**, among whom 50% are women and girls.

This is a landmark partnership where UN Women joins forces with a sister UN agency as well as a Chinese government entity to promote women's economic empowerment. This innovative joint programming modality leverages the unique expertise of each institution as well as local government mandates to maximize the impact of project delivery for our beneficiaries.

## What Will the Project Do

The project will:

- **Train women's agricultural cooperatives and smallholder women farmers** to increase their knowledge and skills in climate-smart agricultural practices
- **Help form and develop women's networks and associations** through strengthening their skills in business management, leadership and corporate governance
- **Research available and potential markets** including digital e-platforms that could be used to market agriculture and non-agriculture products by women's associations, cooperatives and smallholder farmers
- **Bring together women's networks, governments, and the private sector** to share knowledge, tools and promote skills-transfer
- **Influence gender norms within the Chinese government** through raising gender awareness of government partners and service providers in the implementation of the project, particularly those at the local levels
- **Exchange and transmit best practices** from international and Chinese experiences on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of rural revitalization

# Expected Results in Numbers



## **164,000+ rural women**

will have enhanced capacities and access to resources for climate-smart and climate-proofed livelihood opportunities



## **10 women's networks**

will be enhanced through provision of opportunities for skill transfer and partnerships



## **20+ women-owned SMEs**

will have increased capacities and access to markets, financial services and digital transformation for building resilient business



## **500+ local government staff**

will receive increased understanding of gender equality



# The Project will Contribute to

## **I. Achievement of national 14th Five-year Plan targets**

In line with the Plan, where rural revitalization is identified as a key priority, the project will build the skills and knowledge of women smallholder farmers, and women-led farming enterprises and cooperatives to utilize climate-resilient and environmentally positive technology to achieve increased agricultural productivity and incomes.

## **II. Achievement of National Women's Development Plan Targets**

In line with the National Women's Development Plan (2021-2030), the project contributes to the women's empowerment agenda in China from several dimensions:

- developing women's capacity and knowledge in science and technology
- recognizing and supporting women's role in rural revitalization
- increasing women's knowledge and leadership in green development practices

## **III. Progress towards United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) priorities**

The project contributes to several of the priorities set out in the UNSDCF for China 2021-2025:

- transition to a people-centered inclusive economy
- reduction of relative poverty and multi-dimensional poverty
- sustainable livelihoods
- a more resilient environment

## **IV. Gender Mainstreaming in Agricultural and Rural Policy in China and beyond**

Through interventions in Hunan as a pioneer province, this project aims to enhance gender inclusivity and gender responsiveness in rural and agricultural policies and practices in China. Specific angles include:

- facilitate the participation of women in efficient, green and fair agricultural value chains and markets
- improve gender awareness of various levels of government working on environmental, climate change and socio-economic policies through training and exposure to international norms
- promote dialogue between government officials both in China and other countries, UN partners, academia, and women groups, to explore and document innovative while practical modalities of women's empowerment in a changing climate





# UN Women's Comparative Advantage

UN Women will bring its technical expertise and institutional mandates on gender equality and women's economic empowerment to successfully address the project areas in the context of climate change. UN Women is positioned to work at both the national and international levels to create an enabling environment in providing technical guidance to ensure that poverty alleviation and rural revitalization efforts accrue benefits to both men and women equally.

## Partnerships

UN Women will work closely with Government Institutions in China including the project partner Hu'nan Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (DARA), the Provincial Women's Federation, and their counterpart institutions at the county level. A bottom-up strategy will be used to shift local policies and practices to be more responsive to women through piloting best practices and building the capacity of women's groups and federations to engage in policy advocacy. A top-down strategy will also be used to leverage engagement from central government departments and line ministries including All China Women's Federation. The project addresses thematic areas relevant to poverty alleviation, gender equality and agriculture sector and builds upon national policies and local strategies under these areas.

### *Building on UN Women's track record in Qinghai*

From 2018 to 2021, UN Women China worked closely with the local governments in Qinghai province to implement the project '**Strengthening Qinghai Women Farmers' Income Security and Resilience in a Changing Climate**' which focused on climate-smart economic empowerment for rural women and increasing innovative market access. Till date, **over 69,000 women, 6 business networks** including one women-owned agricultural cooperative in the Liupan mountainous area in Qinghai have benefited from capacity development and financing offered under the project. The range of sectors which received support included sustainable agriculture, livestock farming, ethnic arts and crafts, and e-commerce. Apart from increasing women's incomes and achieving diversification of agricultural crops and rural livelihoods, the project also delivered visible results for increasing rural women's political participation and mainstreaming gender awareness in local governance.



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