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## [Accelerating Progress Towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women] MPTF OFFICE GENERIC ANNUAL PROGRAMME<sup>1</sup> NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT

<p><b>Programme Title &amp; Project Number</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme Title: Accelerating Progress Towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Nepal: A Joint Pilot Contributing to the Implementation of the Agricultural Development Strategy of Nepal</li> <li>Programme Number (if applicable)</li> <li>MPTF Office Project Reference Number:<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>	<p><b>Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results<sup>2</sup></b></p> <p><i>Country/Region</i> Nepal, 30 Village Development Committees from three districts in Eastern and Central Regions (Tarai and Hill)</p> <p><i>Priority area/ strategic results</i></p> <p>Goal: Women farmers’ empowerment and rights secured to promote their survival and livelihood in select districts of Nepal</p> <p>UN Women Strategic Plan (2014-2017): Impact 2 on Women’s Economic Empowerment</p> <p>UNDAF (2013-2017) Outcomes:  Outcome 1: Vulnerable and disadvantaged groups get improved access to basic essential social services and programmes in an equitable manner  Outcome 2: Vulnerable groups have improved access to economic opportunities and adequate social protection  Outcome 3: Vulnerable groups experience greater self-confidence, respect and dignity</p> <p>MDG Goal 3</p>
<p><b>Participating Organization(s)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UN Women (UN partners include FAO, WFP, IFAD)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Implementing Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managed by UN Women as the Administrative Agency;</li> <li>Implemented by jointly by MoAD, UN Women, IFAD, FAO and WFP in partnership with government and non-government stakeholders;</li> <li>Cooperating with relevant government agencies including the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), National Agricultural Research Center (NARC), rural women’s cooperatives, networks, youth clubs, media, women farmers’ groups and other pertinent groups</li> </ul>
<p><b>Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</b></p>	<p><b>Programme Duration</b></p>

<sup>1</sup> The term “programme” is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

<sup>2</sup> Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document;

<sup>3</sup> The MPTF Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as “Project ID” on the project’s factsheet page the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

<p>Total approved budget as per project document: USD 5 million + USD 135,000 MPTF /JP Contribution<sup>4</sup>: 135,000 Expenditure : USD 1,457.29 by Agency (if applicable) Agency Contribution by Agency (if applicable) Government Contribution (if applicable) Other Contributions (donors) (if applicable) <b>TOTAL:</b></p>	<p>Overall Duration: 6 months (January – June 2015; overall programme duration is 5 years from 2015-2020)</p> <p>Start Date<sup>5</sup> 1 January 2015 (Funds received on 20 October, 2014)</p> <p>Original End Date<sup>6</sup> 30 June 2015</p> <p>Current End date<sup>7</sup>(dd.mm.yyyy)</p>
<p><b>Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.</b> Assessment/Review - if applicable <i>please attach</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date: dd. mm.yyyy Mid-Term Evaluation Report – if applicable please attach <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date: dd.mm.yyyy</p>	<p><b>Report Submitted By</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name: Sharu Joshi-Shrestha</li> <li>○ Title: Programme Specialist, Women’s Economic Empowerment</li> <li>○ Participating Organization (Lead): UN Women</li> <li>○ Email address: Sharu.joshi-shrestha@unwomen.org</li> </ul>

## **NARRATIVE REPORT**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Joint Programme (JP) “Accelerating Progress Towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Nepal: A Joint Pilot Contributing to Implementation of the Agricultural Development Strategy in Nepal” aims to secure rural women’s livelihoods and rights ensuring sustainable development in the post conflict context of Nepal. A collaborative initiative of four UN agencies – Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Food Programme (WFP) and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the JP was designed in close coordination with Government of Nepal (GoN) and women’s networks and civil society organizations to align with and contribute to a range of international and national commitments seeking to address rural women’s social and economic empowerment. The JP has two phases: a preparatory phase, from January to June 2015, funded by Government of Norway through the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF); and an implementation phase, including an inception phase, covering the period 2015 – 2020. This report provides an overview of the progress achieved thus far during the two months of the preparatory phase, funded by the MPTF.

The first two months of the preparatory phase have witnessed some progress. The Ministry of Agricultural Development (MoAD) endorsed the JP on rural women’s economic empowerment (RWEE), finalizing the operational modality of the JP, and agreeing to pilot the Agricultural Development Strategy (ADS) through UN agencies with UN Women as the lead agency in developing the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) strategy of the ADS. A Programme Steering Committee (PSC), chaired by the Secretary of MoAD, and

<sup>4</sup> The MPTF or JP Contribution, refers to the amount transferred to the Participating UN Organizations, which is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

<sup>5</sup> The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

<sup>6</sup> As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.

<sup>7</sup> If there has been an extension, then the revised, approved end date should be reflected here. If there has been no extension approved, then the current end date is the same as the original end date. The end date is the same as the operational closure date which is when all activities for which a Participating Organization is responsible under an approved MPTF / JP have been completed. As per the MOU, agencies are to notify the MPTF Office when a programme completes its operational activities.

participated by Joint Secretaries of other key ministries, the National Planning Commission (NPC), representatives of women's networks and UN Women Representative as members, was formed. A Working Group of the four UN agencies was also formed and is now functional, and a national consultant hired to provide technical support on RWEE. Request for Proposals (RFP) to carry out the preparatory phase activities, such as situation analysis and baseline survey, developing guidelines and checklist for GESI strategy to implement the ADS, supporting MoAD to institutionalize monitoring of gender-responsiveness in ADS implementation, and convening of national and district-level workshops, was advertised and a pre-bid workshop organized to share and discuss the RFP with interested agencies.

## I. Purpose

The goal of the JP is to **secure rural women's livelihoods and rights ensuring sustainable development in the post conflict context of Nepal**. To achieve its stated goal, **four outcome areas** have been provisionally identified based on the context specific issues and opportunities, and within the framework of the global programme. Within each outcome area, a number of outputs have been formulated that build specifically on identified needs and opportunities.

**Outcome 1** – Rural Nepalese women and their families have improved food and nutrition security

**Outcome 2** – Rural women have increased income to secure their livelihoods

**Outcome 3** – Rural women's representation, participation and leadership enabled and strengthened in communities, local governance and in shaping policies

**Outcome 4** – Gender responsive policy environment secured for the economic empowerment of Nepalese rural women

The JP is designed as a follow up on the commitments of the **United Nations General Assembly Resolution** (November 2011) on the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas, which reiterated a focus on rural women's economic empowerment. It is in line with the **United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)** and its follow up processes, which reaffirm the role of rural women in sustainable development and climate change.

The JP is in line with the GoN's **Development Cooperation Policy** 2014. The programme focuses specifically on assisting the GoN to implement its new **20-year ADS**.<sup>8</sup> The ADS, drafted by the GoN in collaboration with 13 development partners, is committed to the inclusion of women, disadvantaged groups and geographically disadvantaged populations throughout the planning, implementation and monitoring of the strategy. The ADS includes a 10-year Plan of Action, which specifies the development of a GESI strategy. It was designed to address the shortcomings and lessons learned from the Agriculture Perspective Plan (APP) (1995-2015), including its failure to develop a clear gender strategy

The programme aligns with the **United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)** 203-2017, which under outcomes 1, 2 and 3 commits the country to supporting improved access to basic essential social services and programmes in an equitable manner, improved access to economic opportunities and adequate social protection and ensuring self-confidence, respect and dignity of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. The JP cuts across many of the vulnerable client groups identified in the UNDAF, including women of reproductive age; women subject to sexual abuse and exploitation; dalits; undernourished children; rural landless and land-poor; migrant workers and their families; the illiterate; conflict-affected women; people from the lowest

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<sup>8</sup> The ADS is currently in the Parliamentary Committee on 'Agriculture and Water Resource, awaiting Cabinet approval.

performing districts; people from areas especially vulnerable to climate change; and other disadvantaged women and girls.

The JP has been **designed through a consultative and collaborative approach**. An extensive **national consultative workshop** was organized by the four UN agencies **in 2012**, and attended by over 100 participants, including representatives from MoAD and other line ministries, the NPC, various UN agencies, Local Development Officers (LDOs), Women and Children Development Officers (WCDOs), women farmers from Mountain, Hill and Tarai regions, and other concerned stakeholders. **The outcome of the workshop assisted in the design and drafting the initial RWEE proposal**. A **mapping study** was also carried out to identify good practices, gaps in the on-going programmes and processes, and potential broad areas of synergies for the programme to address. The study also contributed to the ‘Strengthening Gender Equality and Social Inclusive Provisions in Nepal’s report of the Agricultural Development Strategy’. **A Working Group, comprised of the four UN agencies FAO, WFP, IFAD and UN Women, was formed to draft the JP. UN Women was given the lead role in the JP development and implementation, and will have the overall responsibility for managing and coordinating the programme funds, monitoring, reporting and evaluation as well as carrying out the administrative tasks.**

The programme consists of **two phases: a preparatory phase** of six months from January to June 2015, and an **implementation phase** from 2015 to 2020, which includes a separate inception phase. The preparatory phase, conducted with the financial support of Government of Norway through the MPTF, will focus on determining the programme management modality and the programme implementation details, including selection of districts and Village Development Committees (VDCs) in close collaboration with the GoN, MoAD. The preparatory phase will support the design and launch of the five-year programme focusing on the social and economic empowerment of rural women in Nepal, based on the consolidation of research, evidence-based practices and lessons learned from the field, and ownership from critical local, regional and national stakeholders. Both the preparatory and implementation phases of the programme have been jointly designed by the four UN agencies to complement each other.

## II. Results

### i) Narrative reporting on results:

**The progress of the programme thus far ( December 2014-February 2015), has centered on finalizing the RWEE proposal and having it endorsed by the GoN, the process of which took slightly longer than expected delaying the beginning of the planned preparatory phase activities to January 2015. The progress of the programme in this regard has included the following:**

- **In May 2014, the four UN agencies presented the draft RWEE proposal at the MoAD in a meeting chaired by the Secretary of MoAD and attended by the Joint Secretaries of the MoAD, other key officials, and Heads of Agencies of the four UN agencies. Particular issues raised in relation to the JP included government ownership, sustainability, national and district-level implementation modality, and alignment with the ADS and the new Development Cooperation Policy 2014.**
- **Following rounds of discussions and revisions, MoAD agreed for the programme to pilot the implementation of Nepal’s new 20-year ADS. MoAD showed interest in taking on ownership of the JP as a commitment towards advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women, acknowledging the feminization of agriculture in Nepal as current theme in light of the significant male foreign labour migration. As the nodal ministry, MoAD agreed to support and facilitate the preparatory work to finalise the programme implementation modality, selection of programme districts and beneficiaries. It was**

agreed that MoAD would be the lead agency to execute the programme in partnership with UN Women, FAO, WFP and IFAD, and other government and non-government stakeholders. UN Women was moreover given the responsibility to pilot the ADS on GESI strategy.

- The Ministry of Finance (MoF) officially endorsed the JP proposal on 9 December 2014, which enabled the JP to leverage the financial support from Government of Norway through the global MPTF (see Annex 1).
- At the national level, the PSC was endorsed by the GoN on 11 February 2015. The PSC will be chaired by the Secretary of MoAD, and the PSC members will include the Joint Secretaries of MoAD, NPC, MoF, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MoWCSW), Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD), Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE), Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), the Director General (DG) of the Department of Agriculture (DoA), DG of the Livestock Office, Senior Agricultural Economist of Policy and International Coordination and Cooperation of MoAD, representatives of rural women's groups as well as UN Women Head of Agency (see Annex 2).
- On the basis of a mapping exercise undertaken in consultation with MoAD, it was decided that three districts of the Eastern and Central Regions (Tarai and Hill) would be selected for programme implementation, adopting a cluster approach. Influencing the decision was the Government's concern that donors' assistance in this sector is heavily concentrated in the Mid- and Far Western Regions to the exclusion of other regions. The particular districts and VDCs will subsequently be selected on the basis of vulnerability indicators identified in the UNDAF (2013-2017) during the remainder of the preparatory phase.
- To facilitate the preparatory phase work, RFP was advertised to carry out preparatory activities, including situation analysis and baselines study, developing guidelines and checklist for GESI strategy to implement the ADS, supporting MoAD to institutionalize monitoring gender-responsiveness of ADS implementation, and convening national and a series of district-level workshops.
- A national consultant was recruited in January 2015 to provide technical support for the programme planning and implementation.

## ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

Not applicable at this stage.

In terms of **next steps**, the following will be carried out shortly:

- Selecting partner agency to carry out the preparatory phase work;
- Convening a meeting of the PSC to finalize the ToR and discuss the district selection criteria;
- Developing guidelines and checklist for GESI strategy of the ADS;
- Supporting MoAD to institutionalize monitoring of gender-responsiveness of the ADS implementation;
- Convening a national and a series of district-level workshops.

The preparatory phase activities will also be supported by the following inception and implementation phase activities (March-December 2015):

- Undertaking capacity assessment of partners;

- Carrying out the situation analysis and baseline survey;
- Drafting the GESI strategy to implement the ADS;
- Support the National Agricultural Council ( NARC) to conduct GESI responsive agricultural research;
- Strengthen Gender unit of the Central Bureau of Statistics on women's economic empowerment related statistics;
- Preparing fact sheets on key thematic areas for policy advocacy on rural women's economic empowerment;
- Providing food assistance to pregnant and lactating women in combination with advocacy and awareness raising;
- Supporting rural women's assets creation activities through employment opportunities;
- Supporting rural women with a provision of inputs such as kitchen garden kit (vegetable seeds, fertilizers and watering can), goats, piglets and chickens, including specialized training to women Farmer Field School (FFS) group on food safety and advocacy on right to food)
- Capacity development (including drudgery reducing know how and tools) of rural women through Farmer Field School (FFS) and Life Schools and advocate for reduction of household drudgery.
- Support capacity development of DDC/VDC representatives on GESI and nutrition.
- Conducting training workshops on farm business plan and entrepreneurship development
- Supporting training and orientation workshops for relevant government, non-government, private sector including financial institutions/cooperatives/savings groups and extension service provider at local level for better targeting of rural women to provide gender responsive services