

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON  
PEACE -- WORK -- FATHERLAND

MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT  
AND THE FAMILY



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30<sup>th</sup> edition of the World Rural Women's Day (WRWD) in Cameroon

15 October 2025

**THEME:**

**“Rural women facing the challenges of climate change and access to productive resources”.**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

## 1. CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION

World Rural Women's Day (WRWD) is celebrated on 15 October each year. The United Nations instituted this day in 1997, following an initiative by several women's Non-Governmental Organisations that met in Beijing in 1995.

The aim of this day is to recognise and promote the key and strategic role that rural women play in developing their countries. They are at the forefront of many economic and social changes that foster sustainable development, and make up the majority of the global agricultural workforce and significantly contribute to the fight against hunger and poverty.

For each year's edition, a central theme is proposed by the United Nations calling on governments, technical and financial partners, civil society organisations, and the media to celebrate the contributions of rural women, acknowledge their challenges and advocate for their empowerment to promote a more inclusive and sustainable rural development. The theme can be contextualised at the national level depending on current issues and challenges.

Thus, in Cameroon, the 30<sup>th</sup> edition is placed under the theme: **“Rural women facing the challenges of climate change and access to productive resources.”** This theme is part of the global dynamic and is in line with:

- The national development priorities outlined in Vision 2035 and operationalised through NDS30;
- The Strategic area No.3 of the National Gender Policy, which focuses on “strengthening the contribution of women to economic development through their integration into productive systems and equal access to employment opportunities and factors of production”;
- The objectives of Cameroon National Adaptation Plan to Climate Change (PNACC);
- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG2, aims to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture; SDG5, which seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; SDG13, recommends taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Rural women, through their daily activities on the environment, land, forests and watercourses, are at the core of this year's theme. In Cameroon, they represent 71.6% of the formal and informal agricultural workforce (EESI 2) and produce more than 85% of the food consumed (ECAM 4). They stabilise rural areas through land development and use their traditional know-how to provide local responses to climate change. However, they are still affected differently by this phenomenon, despite the fact that they depend heavily on natural resources for their livelihoods.

While it is generally agreed that rural women make an invaluable contribution to maintaining food security, developing and stabilising rural areas, it must be acknowledged that efforts still need to be made to facilitate their access to productive resources. Rural women continue to face gender inequalities that limit their access to land, credit, financial and non-financial services, inputs and technologies. They also have limited access to education and training. For example, only 1.6% of women own land titles (NIS 2017). In terms of financing, statistics show that only 16.8% of women can obtain credit (RNDH 2019) and the banking penetration rate for active women is 10% compared to 11% for men (FINSCOPE 2017).

Cognisant of the difficulties faced by these rural women, the Government, through MINPROFF and other administrations, is implementing several initiatives to support their resilience. These include:

- granting support for agricultural equipment and inputs to women and women's groups in order to reduce the burden of their work and strengthen their resilience to climate change;
- capacity building of rural women in modern production techniques, processing, packaging and marketing of their products;
- sensitising women and girls living in rural areas to appropriate and adapted technologies to climate change;
- granting subsidies to women and women's groups;
- popularising financial services adapted to the activities of rural women;
- advocacy for traditional and religious leaders and council officials in favour of women's access to land ownership.

Despite these numerous initiatives, many challenges persist in terms of improving the situation of rural women, their productivity and empowerment.

## 2. Explanation of the theme

The 2025 edition of the World Rural Women's Day will be celebrated in Cameroon under the theme: ***"Rural women facing the challenges of climate change and access to productive resources."*** This theme highlights two major factors affecting rural women, namely the effects of climate change and the difficulties in accessing productive resources.

This theme is particularly relevant in the current context of sustainable development and the fight against climate change. Indeed, climate change is one of the most significant challenges the planet is facing, with devastating impacts on ecosystems, livelihoods and food security. Being no exception, Cameroon is already experiencing an abnormal recurrence of extreme weather conditions like violent winds, high temperatures, heavy rainfall, drought, fires, and disruptions to agricultural calendars. All these factors are endangering the activities of communities and the services they provide.

Climate change can be defined as a set of climate modifications accompanied by a general increase in average global temperatures. It is a global phenomenon whose effects vary according to regions, generations, age, social class, income level and gender. According to results of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), it is clear that the most vulnerable and marginalised populations are the most affected. Both men and women working in natural resource sectors, like agriculture, feel the effects, but to varying degrees.

It is increasingly obvious that women are more vulnerable than men, largely because they make up the majority of the world's poor population and are more dependent on threatened natural resources. Climate change affects rural women socially (increased inequality, confinement to certain types of activities, etc.), economically (impoverishment, lower yields, disappearance of certain animal and plant species, difficult access to water, etc.) and healthwise (malnutrition, waterborne and other diseases, famine, etc.).

However, it is worth mentioning that women should not only consider themselves as victims of climate change. They must take active and effective action using various adaptation and mitigation methods. Water collection and storage, food preservation and rationing, and natural resource management are areas that women have traditionally mastered. They can thus contribute effectively to improving local adaptation capacities and maintaining community livelihoods.

Another major challenge rural women are facing is access to productive resources. Productive resources include land, credit, inputs, technology and even training. These are key factors in rural women's production activities, yet they have less access to them than men. These productive resources are expected to enhance their capacities in order to adapt to climate change. Women's access to productive resources is therefore a crucial issue for sustainable development, food security, resilience to climate change and, by extension, their economic empowerment.

In order to tackle climate change-related challenges and access to productive resources, emphasis must be placed among other things on:

- identifying the gender-specific impacts of climate change and putting in place measures to address them;
- taking women's priorities and needs into account in development projects;
- women's participation in developing new technologies;
- partnership between women's associations, women farmers' networks and inclusive community groups to promote the sharing of knowledge and success stories;
- taking into account important gender-specific issues relating to access to resources, particularly land, credit, financial services, training, information and technology.

### **3. OBJECTIVES**

#### **2-1 General objective**

Encourage rural women to take ownership of measures to adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change and facilitate their access to productive resources.

#### **2-2 Specific objectives**

- Intensify advocacy for more support to rural women;
- Capacity building of rural women in sustainable agro-pastoral and fishing practices;
- Capacity building of rural women in biodiversity conservation methods;
- Facilitate rural women's access to productive resources (land, inputs, credit, technologies and adapted tools);
- Popularise agricultural and technological innovations among rural women.

### **4. EXPECTED RESULTS**

- Advocacy for more support to rural women is intensified;
- Rural women's capacity building in sustainable agro-pastoral and fishing practices is strengthened;
- Rural women's capacity building in biodiversity conservation methods is strengthened;
- Access to productive resources for women living in rural areas is facilitated;
- Agricultural and technological innovations are popularised among rural women.

### **5. SUB-THEMES**

- Rural women and community adaptation to climate change;
- Rural women facing digital challenges;
- Production, processing and packaging of local products: acquisition and implementation of standards;
- Rural women and technological innovations in the agropastoral and fisheries sector;
- Rural women and the promotion of "Made in Cameroon";
- Rural women's access to land;
- Rural women and the setting up of cooperatives;
- Promotion of agricultural value chains;
- Rural women and sustainable development;
- Rural women and biodiversity conservation;
- Rural women and access to financing;
- Rural women and agroecology;
- Women living in rural areas and resilience in conflict zones;

- Rural women and local governance of natural resources;
- Rural women and organisation into production sectors and networks.

## 6. ACTIVITIES

- Production and dissemination of communication materials;
- Café debate on the theme of WRWD 2025;
- Climate café: exchanges on farming practices adapted to climate change;
- Green solutions forum: exhibition of local female initiatives in agroecology;
- Multi-stakeholder's advocacy: mobilisation of decision-makers on the challenges of rural women's access to productive resources;
- Digital literacy sessions on sustainable agriculture;
- Exhibition fairs on the know-how of rural women and girls;
- Educational talks on access to land ownership, financing and other topics;
- Multifaceted support to rural women's and girls' groups;
- Capacity building sessions for rural women and girls in farming techniques/new production techniques; processing and preservation of agro-pastoral products/financial education/partnerships negotiation;
- Exchange visits;
- Capacity building for rural women and girls in sustainable agro-pastoral and fishing practices and natural resource management;
- Radio and television programmes;
- Launch and celebration of the WRWD;
- Technical support for activities organised by partners.

## 7. STAKEHOLDERS

- Public, semi-public and private administrations;
- Technical and Financial Partners;
- Civil Society Organisations;
- Women farmers' organisations;
- Media.

**N.B:** All reports of the 30th edition of the World Rural Women's Day are to be submitted no later than 31 October 2025.