



**Intervention made by Mrs Sumitra Mahajan, Member of Parliament,
at Commission on the Status of Women, at the Panel discussion on
"The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger
eradication, development and current challenges" on February 24, 2011**

Thank you very much Madam Chairperson,



I would like to congratulate all the panellists, particularly Godavariji from India. She is working in group farming and self help groups.

I would like to highlight few points for the consideration of the Panellists and delegations on which, we in India are working.

The planning process of the Government of India is based on the premise that women and children are not homogenous categories; they belong to diverse castes, classes, communities, economic groups, and are located within a wide range of geographic and development zones. Mapping and addressing the specific

deprivations that arise from these multiple categorisations are essential for the success of planned and targeted interventions. These include issues of concern such as:

- a. access to agricultural land
 - i. Improving claims to family land
 - ii. Enhancing legal awareness on inheritance laws
 - iii. Providing legal support services and also financial help
- b. Improving access to public land by using group approach for rural women
- c. Improving access to market by providing subsidized credits to the poor and encouraging formation of self-help groups
- d. Putting in place measures to protect small and marginal farmers, especially women farmers, against land speculation, shifts to non-agricultural uses, and contract farming.
- e. Developing social security measures particularly for women in the unorganised sector to cover issues like work conditions, pension, housing, child care etc.
- f. Strengthening and expanding investment in public health, education, environment and social sectors, with special focus on women and children.
- g. Giving priority to pro-poor public investment, such as rural infrastructure, including, rural electrification, roads, housing, drinking water and sanitation.

We believe that a holistic approach incorporating these concerns is essential prerequisite to empower rural women.

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