

**Institute of Sociology under the Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences &
Gender and Development in China Network (GAD Network) &
Beijing Zhongze Women's Legal Consulting Services Center**

The Shadow Report of Chinese Women's NGOs
on the Combined Seventh and Eighth Periodic Report
Submitted by China under Article 18 of the *Convention on
the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against
Women*

**Rural Women
(Article 14)**

(For public information)

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I. Efforts and Progress

The Chinese government has safeguarded the land rights and interests of rural women through legislation and policy making. By 2012, 18 provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities) across the country has developed measures for implementation of the *Law on Land Contract in Rural Areas*, and 15 provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities) introduced measures for distribution of land compensation, with more specific provisions for married, divorced and widowed women regarding their entitled land contract rights and interests. The *Property Law* coming into effect as of October 1, 2007 plays a role in curtailing the conducts against the legitimate rights and interests of the members of collective economic organizations (including women) in the name of village pacts, general assembly decisions of the villagers and other means. The *Law on the Mediation and Arbitration of Rural Land Contract Disputes* coming into effect as of January 2010 also provides a new means of relief for rural women involved in land rights disputes. On July 30, 2011, the Chinese government promulgated *China National Program for Women's Development (2011-2020)*, setting the protection of the land rights and interests of rural women as one of the main objectives and key strategic initiatives. Meanwhile, NGOs have been raising public attention to rural women's land rights and interests via legal aid and public interest litigation. For example, Beijing Zhongze Women's Legal Consulting Services Center have been providing legal aid for women whose land rights and interests are violated, with a large number of high-profile cases processed throughout years. In recent years, the Center launched projects in several provinces, facilitating the establishment of a three-level model (villager autonomy, judicial trial and government policy) to secure rural women's land rights, and advancing the institutional reform at the project sites to better protect the land rights and interests of rural women.

Technical training and supportive funds and projects have been provided to promote women's entrepreneurship, helping rural women out of poverty. The *National Technology Training Plan for New Farmers (2003-2010)* developed by the Ministry of Agriculture stresses the importance to mobilize and encourage rural women to take advantage of the relevant educational resources. Modern distance education for rural women made its premiere in 2009, providing the majority of rural women with regular training. In 2010, the Ministry of Education and the ACWF jointly released the *Opinions on Doing a Good Job in Vocational Education and Skills Training for Rural Women* in order to improve rural women's scientific and cultural well-beings and empower them in the development of modern agriculture, entrepreneurship and employability. Local women's federations founded around

150,000 schools for rural women and created more than 200,000 agricultural and forestry technology demonstration bases in various types and at all levels, to provide rural women, especially women in poor areas in central and western China, with training of practical technology and the related knowledge. Microfinance for rural women proceeds on an ongoing basis. To enhance women's production and living conditions, as of the end of 2012, the program "Mother's Water Cellar" had attracted more than 600 million yuan for the construction of water cellars and small-size centralized water supply facilities, directly benefiting 1.9 million people. The China Population Welfare Foundation, the China Family Planning Association and the China Population News jointly launched a Happiness Project for the alleviation of poor mothers. As of the end of 2011, 463 project sites were set up in 29 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions across the country, with a total investment of 830 million Yuan, relieving 250,000 poor mothers and families and benefiting a population of 1.13 million.

Women's right to political participation has been safeguarded by legislation, training and networking. The *Organic Law of the Villagers' Committees of the People's Republic of China* revised in October 2010 stipulates that there should be women members in each villagers' committee, and female village representatives shall account for more than one-third of the village assembly attendants. The ACWF and the Li Ka Shing Foundation cooperated in a training program, with over 4,000 female village leaders trained from 2010 to 2011. Other organizations engaged in training and support network construction for backbone and elected women include the Hunan Women's Federation, Shaanxi Research Association for Women and Family, Qianxi County of Hebei Province, the Gender & Participatory studio under the Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences, Henan Community Education Research Center, Beijing Cultural Development Center for Rural Women and so on.

Health education and services have reached rural women. Women's federations at all levels have carried out many programs, such as the fitness campaign for hundreds of millions of women, the Health Express for Mothers project, the project for gender equality and reproductive health, etc. *China Environmental Protection Association (CEPA)* Centre of Women's Environment and Women's Health Network has also launched education and advocacy campaigns on women, the environment and health. In Yunnan, NGOs have carried out training and intervention sessions in the projects for reproductive health and AIDS prevention, enhancing gender analysis capacity of their partners while preparing training handbooks and reading materials. According to the Third Wave Survey on The Social Status of Women in China 2010, among rural women aged under 35, 89.4% received prenatal care before giving birth to the last child, while 87.7% delivered their children in the hospital, up by 13.4 and 40.6 percentage points respectively compared with 2000.

II. Gaps and Challenges

Rural women's land rights and interests are still challenged in many ways. As is shown in the Third Wave Survey on The Social Status of Women in China, 21.0% of rural women do not possess any land in 2010, 11.8 percentage points higher over 2000. Among them, women losing land due to marital changes (getting married, remarried, divorced or widowed) accounted for 27.7% (compared to the only 3.7% among men), while women losing land due to expropriation or circulation accounted for 27.9% (of which 87.9% received a compensation while 12.1% failed to obtain any compensation, 1.9 percentage points higher than that of men). In addition, landless

women got fewer opportunities for resettlement than men did, indicating the need to build a better-established rights mechanism for rural women whose land rights and interests are infringed.

There are fewer rural women engaged in non-agricultural labor than men by proportion, and women earn a lower income than men do. The Third Wave Survey on The Social Status of Women in China 2010 showed that in rural areas the average annual labor income of working women was 56.0% of that of men, and the proportion of rural women mainly engaged in non-agricultural labor was 24.9% compared to the 36.8% of men.

Provisions on the proportion of rural women engaged in politics still face challenges in enforcement. According to the Third Wave Survey on The Social Status of Women in China, women accounted for 19.3% of the villagers' committee members, 5.8% of the committee directors (principal and deputy) and 17.5% of the villager representatives, not matching the role they played in production and daily life.

Education of rural women was still lower than that of men and urban women. Women receiving high school education and above accounted for 33.7% on average, respectively 54.2% and 18.2% in urban and rural areas while only 10.0% in central and western China, 4.6 percentage points lower than that of men in the rural areas.

Prenatal care and hospital delivery were not so popular among women in rural areas compared to urban women. According to the Third Wave Survey on The Social Status of Women in China, the proportions of rural women aged under 35 receiving prenatal care before giving birth to the last child and delivering their children in the hospital were respectively 5.4 and 9.5 percentage points lower than that of urban women, while in central and western regions, 43.4% of rural women had never done any gynecological examination, 4.3 percent higher than their peers in the eastern region.

III. Suggestions in Response

Measures should be adopted to ensure the land rights and interests of rural women. Gender-sensitive legislation is necessary in defining the membership of a collective economic organization, and the co-owners (including women) of the family entitled to land contract and management rights should be legally defined; In the replacement or renewal of certificates for land titles, the names of the spouses should be concurrently registered with the certificate, clearly defining identical rights and obligations for both parties and requiring the signature by both parties to validate any transfer, assignment or lease of land so as to prevent women from losing their rural land contract rights without being informed. In addition, oversight mechanisms should be phased in to review the legality of villagers' autonomy and village pacts in approach to regulate self-governance. In terms of judicial relief, refined provisions should be developed to ensure women of truly effective assistance.

More employment and training opportunities should be offered to rural women. Production models and operating programs that may benefit rural women should be scaled up to ensure women's access to reliable and efficient resources of agricultural production. Rural women should be enabled to better use financial services, encouraging them to form mutual-help cooperatives and production associations. Efforts should be made to raise rural women's awareness of new agricultural knowledge as well as to increase their use of new media. The relevant training should

take into account the realities of rural women when designing the contents and methods as well as arranging time and place.

Policies on mandatory quota of women engaged in political decision making should be effectively implemented, backed by capacity building and advocacy campaigns to promote rural women's political participation. Effective mechanisms should be sought to raise the proportion of rural women engaged in politics to empower them in political affairs. More educational resources and opportunities should be developed to strengthen leadership training and capacity building for community management of backbone women leaders at the grassroots level, as well as to improve the selection and promotion procedures. Teambuilding should be intensified among grassroots women's organizations in rural communities. Besides, gender-based discrimination in village pacts should be casted aside.

In respect of production, life and public services in rural areas, further attention should be paid to the needs of women left behind. In the busy season, enterprises employing massive migrant workers are encouraged to support these workers back home for farming work. Aid teams should be organized in rural areas for production purposes, using specialized machinery to help left-behind women complete farming tasks, reducing the their labor load. Cultural and entertainment facilities should be redoubled for left-behind women, accompanied by skills or knowledge training, helping them lead a rich cultural life. Service mechanisms should be bettered on an ongoing basis to provide information consulting and psychological counseling for left-behind rural women regarding family and marital relations.

More efforts should be made in support of education, health and social security. There should be more investment in educational resources for the poor and remote areas, thus ensuring the right to education for girls. Dedicated investment and medical assistance should be employed among key targeted population. The general social security system should be refined, with social assistance mechanisms established to help vulnerable groups of women (women from single-parent families, with lower educational level or suffering other difficulties) in rural areas.

Appendix

Catalog of the Organizations

Institute of Sociology under the Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences

The Institute of Sociology under the Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences, founded in May 1988, is the sole research institute mainly dedicated to sociological studies in Yunnan Province. The Institute prioritizes applied sociology and currently focuses on major theoretical and practical issues about social development, social policy and social life in Yunnan, including gender and development, as well as studies on marriage, family and children's issues.

Website: <http://www.sky.yn.gov.cn/jgsz/yjys/shxyjs/>

Gender and Development in China Network (GAD Network)

The GAD China Network is a non-governmental, non-profit alliance consisting of non-governmental women's organizations across China on a voluntary basis, with a mission to advance gender mainstreaming and promote gender equality mainly by publicity, and supplemented by exchanges, training, research and social activities.

Website: <http://www.china-gad.org/>

Beijing Zhongze Women's Legal Consulting Services Center

The predecessor of Beijing Zhongze Women's Legal Consulting Services Center is the Research Center for Women's Law under the Law School of Peking University. Zhongze Center was founded in December 1995, being the first non-profit civil society organization dedicated to women's legal aid and research in China. The center targets at women and provides legal aid as a means of relief, committed to protecting the legitimate rights and interests of poor and vulnerable women by shooting their problems from a unique and innovative perspective, ensuring their rights in social, political and economic affairs, raising their rights and law awareness, and helping them embark on a path to self-esteem, self-reliance and self-improvement.

Website: <http://www.woman-legalaid.org.cn>