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Report Name: Dominican Republic Introduces National Gender Equality Policy for the Agricultural Sector

Country: Dominican Republic

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Report Highlights:

The Dominican Republic has introduced the National Gender Equality Policy in the Agricultural Sector to address existing gender disparities affecting rural women. This policy, backed by Dominican legal frameworks and international commitments, aims to enhance women’s participation, resources, and economic security within the agricultural sector. The goals of the new policy align with global standards on gender equality, food security, and rural development, especially under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and reflects the principles outlined in the United Nations International Year of the Woman Farmer, which empowers women to lead sustainable farming practices. The following report is a summary of the gender policy launched November 2024.

Takeaways

The Dominican Republic's National Gender Equality Policy in the agricultural sector represents a significant step toward reducing gender disparities in rural areas, aligning with international gender and development standards. By addressing key barriers and providing targeted support, the policy aims to create a more inclusive and sustainable agricultural environment. This policy has the potential to improve both productivity, which could in turn, support rural economies, and reinforce food security, ultimately contributing to a more equitable agricultural landscape.

By focusing on equitable access to resources, improving working conditions, and providing technical support for rural women, the policy may raise agricultural yields and strengthen the local market. For U.S. companies, this could open up new opportunities to support Dominican agriculture through technology, resources, and training, helping to further develop the sector while promoting gender equality.

I. Policy Overview

The Ministry of Agriculture and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) collaborated to develop the National Gender Equality Policy in Agriculture. The policy focuses on economic empowerment, institutional strengthening, and the development of agribusiness for rural women. It also addresses gender vulnerability to climate change and aims to promote sustainable agricultural practices.

1.1 Key Objectives:

- **Increase Visibility:** Enhance the visibility of women in forestry and agriculture.
- **Leadership Roles:** Increase women's participation in leadership roles within agricultural and forestry organizations.
- **Land Tenure:** Reduce gaps in land tenure and incorporate women into the agricultural labor market.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Support rural women in developing their entrepreneurial projects to transform their families' and communities' realities.

1.2 Legal Framework and National Legislation

- The policy is grounded in the Dominican Republic's legal foundation, starting with the 2010 Constitution, which prohibits gender discrimination.
- Supporting laws, such as Law 1-12 (National Development Strategy) Incorporates gender perspective in public policies to identify and eliminate discrimination.

- Law 589-16 (Food Security and Nutrition) establishes gender equality as a fundamental principle in food security governance.
- Law 55-97 Agrarian Reform The law permits joint titling of land for couples.
- The 176-07 Law on Local Governments: promotes the participation of women in local management and in participatory budgets.

II. Institutional and International Support

- International Cooperation: The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Council of Ministers for Women of Central America and the Dominican Republic (COMMCA).
- National Institutions: Key agencies, such as the Ministry of Women and the Office of Sectoral Agriculture for Women, coordinate efforts to integrate gender equality into local agriculture.
- Regional Policies: The Dominican Republic adheres to the SICA Regional Gender Equality Policy and global frameworks like the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); Belém do Pará Convention, The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women; Declaration on the Rights of Rural Women, Aims to promote the advancement of women's rights, with a focus on rural women, during the period 2024-2034.

III. Gender Equality Gaps in the Agricultural Sector

The policy identifies critical gaps in access to productive assets, social protection, and representation in decision-making processes, such as:

- Land Ownership and Access: Women in rural areas struggle to own or access land, which is essential for farming and livestock activities. Without land, women have fewer opportunities to invest in and benefit from agriculture.
- Credit and Financial Services: Women, especially in rural areas, often lack access to credit and financial resources compared to men. This limits their ability to purchase essential tools, seeds, equipment, and other resources needed for agricultural productivity. This makes it harder for them to increase their income or improve their businesses and economic autonomy.
- Access to Social Safety Nets: Rural women have less access to social safety nets like pensions, unemployment benefits, and health care. This leaves them more vulnerable to poverty, especially when they face economic shocks, like crop failures or illness.

- **Food Insecurity:** More rural women experience food insecurity compared to men. Over half of rural households (54.1 percent) suffer from moderate to severe food insecurity. This is due to limited access to resources and support systems.
- **Limited Role in Policy and Decision-Making:** Women in rural areas are often left out of decisions about agriculture, family finances, and community development. Men usually dominate in policymaking and planning, which leads to decisions that don't address women's needs or challenges.
- **Cultural and Institutional Barriers:** Traditional gender roles and cultural norms often prevent women from participating in local or national decision-making. This lack of representation means policies don't always consider the specific needs of women.
- **Disproportionate Poverty Among Women:** The poverty rate for women in rural areas is significantly higher than for men, with the gender gap being particularly pronounced in agricultural communities. According to the National Statistics Office (ONE), in 2023, for every 100 men living in poverty, there were 137.7 women in the same situation. This shows how gender increases the chances of being poor, especially in rural areas.
- **Poverty and Gendered Insecurity:** Rural women face not just poverty, but also problems like limited education, poor healthcare, and fewer legal protections. These barriers make it harder for women to escape poverty and improve their living conditions.

IV. Policy Objectives and Strategic Pillars

The General Objectives of this Policy is to foster gender equality in the agri-food sector, ensuring equitable rights and opportunities.

4.1 Specific Goals

- Improve gender-based data collection and analysis to inform policy.
- Increase women's access to productive resources and services.
- Enhance decent work conditions and social protections for women in rural areas.
- Support the transformation of gender norms and address gender-based violence.

4.2 Strategic Axes and Goals

- **Data Collection and Gender Analysis:** Improved gender statistics for informed policy decisions.
- **Equitable Access to Resources:** Ensure equal access to financial and technical resources for women.

- Decent Work Conditions: Promote fair employment and social protection.
- Social Norm Transformation: Prevent gender-based violence in rural communities.
- Institutional Capacity Building: Strengthen gender mainstreaming across agricultural institutions.

V. Implementation and Monitoring

- A multi-institutional committee, led by the Ministry of Agriculture, will oversee implementation, with regular stakeholder meetings.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Key components include baseline evaluations, annual plans, periodic assessments, and external evaluations by gender and agriculture experts.

Attachments:

No Attachments.